Against fascism and racism

January 2005 No 355 £2.50

INTERNATIONAL Searchlight

The state of the BNP in 2005

Exclusive interview with the Secret Agent
page 18

Fascists exploit political turmoil in Ukraine
page 24

Signs of hate

NOW AVAILABLE: Required reading into the nature and the culture of fascist insignia, words and fashion, Signs of Hate is aimed at people who work within the community, in particular with young people, who may be otherwise unaware of the influences affecting the behaviour of the youngsters in their trust. Signs of Hate exposes the mythology, secret code words and other signs of hate that can influence young minds and lead into racist violence.

"Required Reading".
The Times, 30 January 2004.

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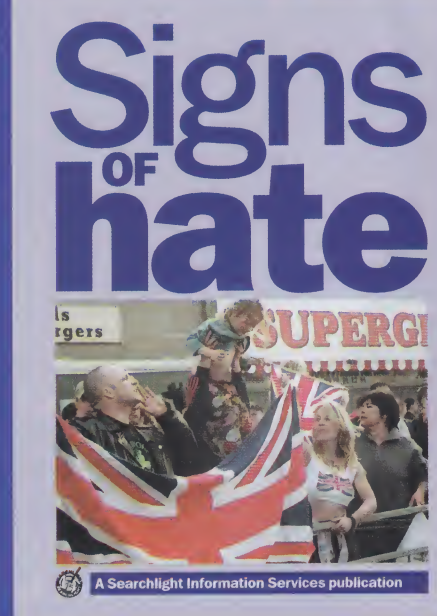

The international anti-fascist monthly January 2005 No 355

Editorial

With every by-election the front line fight against fascism shifts to another town. The question we always have to ask ourselves is, will we be ready for the next electoral battle when the British National Party circus turns up in our own locality?

Of course not every area is a BNP target area, though the nazi party's ambition is that one day it will be able to mount an effective campaign anywhere in Britain.

At the end of November last year it was the Black Country in the Midlands where the BNP hoped to notch up another councillor. Despite starting out believing it had a good chance of winning in Old Warley ward in Sandwell, the BNP ended up third with 16% of the vote.

The important lesson is that the BNP lost because of a strong consistent local campaign by anti-fascists including both distribution of anti-BNP propaganda and mobilisation of the anti-BNP vote. This was the BNP's third successive defeat since its victory in Goresbrook in east London in September and the Sandwell campaign shows that the BNP bubble can be burst.

It is important to recognise that the growth of the BNP has come in a political context: the rehabilitation of fascism across Europe. In fact Britain was rather slow after the rise in the late 1980s of the Front National in France and the Republikaner in Germany to follow suit. Just as these organisations try and explain away their fascist past, so does the BNP.

We have to be under no illusions where this historical revisionism leads. In Italy – the birthplace of fascism – Mussolini's heirs portray themselves as post-fascists. But a fascist is still a fascist no matter what political contortions they manage to perform. As we report this month, Gianfranco Fini has been appointed Italy's new Foreign Minister. At some point this leader of the fascist National Alliance will be making his way to Downing Street to meet Jack Straw and Tony Blair, proudly sporting his flame badge, a symbol showing that he still holds a torch for Italian fascism.

Searchlight readers should protest in the strongest terms to their MPs when Fini does come here so that both he and the government are clear that this is no ordinary politician but one tainted by the crimes of fascism.

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Cover photo: Martin Adolfsson/Expo

Publisher **Gerry Gable.** Editor **Steve Silver.** Director of research **Nick Lowles.** European editor **Graeme Atkinson.** Sub editor **Sonia Gable.**
Published by **Searchlight Magazine Ltd** PO Box 1576, Ilford IG5 0NG • Telephone **020 7681 8660** • Fax **020 7681 8650**
email **editors@searchlightmagazine.com** • website **www.searchlightmagazine.com** • ISSN 0262-4591 • © Searchlight 2005

BNP regional roundup

northwest

Life continues to be a struggle for the British National Party in the North West of England. Once its golden region, the North West has been beset by political and internal problems ever since the BNP made its breakthrough in Burnley in 2002. Just when the party thought it was reorganising and over the worst, more difficulties emerge. Nick Lowles provides an insight into the North West BNP.

The British National Party once considered the North West the jewel in its crown. A substantial breakthrough in Burnley, a by-election victory in Blackburn and a record 16% general election vote in Oldham propelled the region into the national headlines and gave the party great hope for further local government gains and an MEP in last year's European elections. Neither hope was realised and in fact the BNP vote has declined more rapidly here than in any other region.

Over the past six months the BNP has attempted to reorganise in the North West. Bev Jones, the party's full-time regional organiser, has surrounded herself with loyal lieutenants in the hope of removing troublesome branch organisers or at least bringing them into line.

Assisting Jones has been the deputy regional organiser Mike Lester, who also runs the Manchester South branch and is *de facto* leader of the party's Stockport group. A new position of Lancashire campaign manager has been created for David Shapcott, the new Burnley organiser. His assistant is Roy Goodwin, a former Oldham BNP council candidate and now organiser of the Blackpool branch. On Merseyside, Jones has a strong supporter in Ian Collingwood, who last summer replaced Joe Owens as local organiser.

Jones has been attempting to use a carrot and stick strategy. She has tried to placate some of the local organisers who are hostile to Nick Griffin, the party leader, but is quick to take action when that fails. However, this policy has sometimes backfired as her decisions to remove organisers or even suspend whole branches have only fuelled resentment.

This was certainly the case last summer in Clitheroe. A high-profile meeting addressed by John Tyndall, the former BNP leader and Griffin's main rival, did not go down well with the party leadership. First they tried to persuade Wayne Cox, the local organiser, to cancel the invitation but when that failed and the meeting became a show of strength against the leadership, Cox was suspended from the party. It was only the outcry from other members and the potential the suspension had for destabilising neighbouring branches that forced the leadership to backtrack.

The same tactic was used in Rochdale in autumn after Tyndall's sidekick Richard Edmonds addressed a branch meeting. That, and the attendance of local organiser Kev Bryan at a pro-Tyndall Spearhead Support Group meeting in Yorkshire a few days earlier, led to Bryan's suspension. That too was rescinded a short time later after further internal uproar.

While Cox and Bryan have temporarily been placated by private meetings with the party hierarchy, other North West branches are still in rebellious mood. A regular attendee at Tyndall's meetings is the Wigan and Bolton organiser Ian Hague. In early September, he invited Tyndall and Edmonds to address his branch meeting. Worried that she would trigger a more widespread rebellion, Jones decided not to act against Hague. Perhaps her view was influenced by the almost universal support for Tyndall in the meeting.

Jones's one success in recent months has been to bring Burnley branch back under some sort of party control. Until last summer the branch acted autonomously and resented any attempts to interfere in its political direction or activities. This has begun to change under Shapcott's leadership. He has been able to surround himself with a small group of activists, many of whom only joined the party after it had begun its political breakthrough. Among them is councillor Patricia Thompson, who with her husband has begun to speak at BNP meetings across the north.

In happier times Robin Evans with Julie Russell

Shapcott has opened a BNP office in Burnley and is playing an increasingly important role locally and regionally through his role as Lancashire campaign director. The BNP polled 16.7% in Burnley in the European election after an appalling year politically and believes that it has turned the corner and will once again advance in next year's local elections.

But this transformation has not been without cost. Many of the key organisers who were behind the BNP's initial success in the town have left the party or at least are openly hostile to Griffin and Shapcott. They include Steve Smith, Simon Bennett and Sharon Pastou. Others who have recently attended pro-Tyndall events are councillor Barry Birks and former councillor David Edwards. Burnley BNP branch meetings are small and it is questionable how many activists Shapcott can rely on.

In neighbouring Blackburn, the fortunes of the BNP have gone from bad to worse. In November the branch's latest organiser, Tony Dailly, resigned in anticipation of being pushed. He had only taken over running the branch in June following the party's poor showing in the local elections but within a few months had alienated several other key activists. He has been replaced by Nick Holt, a relatively new BNP member who suffered the indignity of being beaten by Mark Cotterill, of the tiny England First Party, in last June's elections.

Dailly's bitterness towards Jones was evident in his resignation letter. "...You have continually failed me, your organiser. Originally I did not want to be organiser but you arranged for Blackburn activists group to vote John Murphy or me. As you know it was eleven to one in my favour and the clique thought that they had a front man, boy oh boy did they get it wrong. I am nobody's front man.

"... This is not the first time the party has treated me in this cavalier manner. The Robin Evans affair, I approched Nick Griffin to try to warn him that Evans would destroy the Blackburn branch. Nick Griffin had me thrown out of the party, this is another example of our leaderships failure to lead. Later i was asked to return to the party and repair the damage that Evans had done and like a fool I did. **Fool me once shame on your, fool me twice shame on me.** I did not get an apology from Nick Griffin when I was proven right about Evans.

"I feel I have been betrayed, stabbed in the back by people I thought where my friends. People who have been guests in my home, eaten my food, drunk my drink. I have been surronded by liers, hypocrities, cowards and of course a Judas. I am philosophical about it all for I believe what goes around comes around and you will be seeing me around." I resign." [*sic* throughout]

Dailly's departure means that Blackburn BNP has had five organisers in 16 months. The first to go was BNP councillor Robin Evans, who resigned from the party claiming to be fed up with the drug dealers and football hooligans in the branch. He was replaced by Trevor Maxfield, who did not last long after his links to Cotterill were revealed to the party leadership. Then came John Murphy, a postman and former National Democrat. The BNP had high hopes for Murphy but he was blamed for the poor local election results.

Whether Holt will do any better is unclear. He takes over a dispirited and disorganised branch many of whom are openly hostile to the BNP leadership and close to Cotterill. This was evident at the Spearhead Support Group meeting, held in Blackburn on Sunday 12 December. The social, organised by Cotterill, brought together local BNP members, Tyndallites from across the North West and Yorkshire, White Nationalist Party activists and the England First Party.

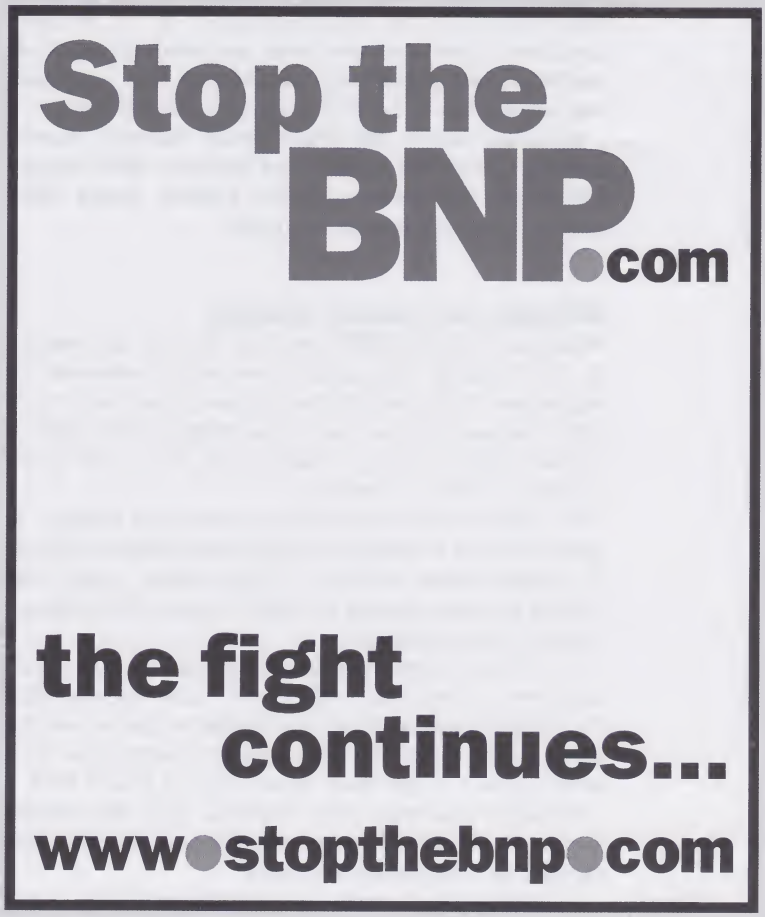
A further worry for Jones is the continuing demise of the Oldham branch. The BNP once had high hopes for Oldham. After 2001, following the riots and the large local BNP vote in the general election, the BNP thought it would get councillors elected. That was not to be, largely because of the robust campaign by anti-fascists, Labour and the Lib Dems from which the BNP has not recovered.

So demoralised was the branch that its organiser Mick Treacy resigned, a beaten man. He was replaced by Anita Corbett and her succession was proof that the centre of political gravity was shifting from Oldham to Royton. But Corbett has found it tough, with many Oldham activists resenting her Royton connection and others still looking to Treacy for leadership.

Her difficulties grew in early November when a branch meeting ended in violence. The BNP's student organiser Tony Wentworth was head-butted and the party security officers ran off.

Although many of the traditional areas of BNP strength have declined, new groups are emerging. Among them are the Bury and Blackpool branches, but while they might be organisationally and actively light years ahead of some other units, their political potential is more limited.

The North West BNP is entering the run-up to the general election in despondent mood. The BNP has decided to select one target seat for each of its main regions and Burnley is the choice for the North West. While the party will be hoping to save its deposit in a few other seats, including Oldham West & Royton and Pendle, it remains unclear whether Jones can whip the region into shape in time for a more concerted campaign.



Anti-racists march in Scotland

MORE THAN 300 people marched through the streets of Glasgow at the end of November in a rally against racism.

The Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) event marked St Andrew's Day and included politicians and local community groups. It came a week after Daanish Zahid was found guilty of the racially motivated murder of the local schoolboy Kriss Donald.

STUC general secretary Bill Speirs said the murder of Kriss, from Pollokshields, was a focus for this year's event. Kriss was attacked and bundled into a car while walking along Kenmure Street in March and later killed.

Demonstrators waved anti-racism placards as they walked from St Andrew's in the Square church in the Saltmarket to gather at the Glasgow Film Theatre in Rose Street at noon.

The STUC had invited people from the Pollokshields area of the city, in the light of recent racial tensions there.

Daanish Zahid, 20, was found guilty of murdering the teenager and had not yet been sentenced as we went to press.

Bill Speirs said: "The murder of Kriss Donald showed that racism is alive and well in this country. This event was about showing such discrimination is unacceptable in a modern Scotland. Scotland was built on diversity and our multicultural society is something that enriches and strengthens us and should be celebrated."

Glasgow Govan MP Mohammad Sarwar, former Scottish Socialist leader and Glasgow MSP Tommy Sheridan and Independent Falkirk West MSP Dennis Canavan joined the rally.

Millwall on racism charge

MILLWALL HAS BECOME the first club to be charged by the Football Association over racist behaviour by supporters. The governing body took action last month after Liverpool's Djimi Traoré was allegedly the target of monkey noises during a Carling Cup tie at the club's ground, The Den, in October.

The chanting has never been mentioned publicly by either club but is believed to have been audible when the FA studied video evidence of the match, which was marred by crowd trouble for which Liverpool and Millwall are both being charged.

The FA is determined to stamp out racism, which has been a particularly high-profile issue recently after the problems during England's friendly in Madrid and the abuse meted out to Birmingham City's Dwight Yorke by a small number of Blackburn Rovers fans at Ewood Park.

Millwall's chairman Theo Paphitis, who has worked hard to rid his club of racism and violence, described the charges as "completely ridiculous".

A report in *The Guardian* quoted him as saying: "I find it very difficult to explain it because there was never any indication of racist abuse being brought into the discussions. God knows what the FA are up to. We are still waiting for the FA to send us their evidence.

"I just find the whole thing staggering. It just seems like the FA is a rudderless ship at the moment and are seeking publicity for their own aim. Racism is too important a subject to use to point score."

Millwall has also been charged over missiles thrown from the stands by the club's supporters.

The FA has also charged Liverpool as a result of the threatening and violent behaviour of its fans, who ripped out and smashed seats in the away end and hurled seats and coins at police who were trying to stop an outbreak of violence near the end of the match.

A group of Liverpool supporters surged towards home fans, apparently in response to chants about the Hillsborough disaster and Ken Bigley, the Merseysider who had just been murdered in Iraq. It appeared that coins were thrown into an area housing Millwall followers.

Both clubs face being fined if charges are proven against them.

BNP routed in Black Country

THE BNP FAILED to win a second councillor in the Black Country at the end of November when the party was beaten into a poor third place in a by-election in Sandwell. The elections in June 2004 had dislodged the BNP from all but one of the wards in Sandwell and Dudley but the party had high hopes of victory in a by-election in the Old Warley ward of Sandwell, which had returned three Conservative councillors in June.

But despite putting up the prominent BNP officer Simon Smith as the candidate, the party polled just 16%. Voters clearly thought one BNP councillor in Sandwell was quite enough and a widely supported campaign by local trade unions and Unite Against Fascism played a vital role. However the BNP may have taken enough Conservative votes to hand the seat to Labour.

The BNP had been talking up its prospects but behind the scenes the party election officers knew they had a very low calibre of canvassers. To try to overcome this they bussed in people from the Northwest and Yorkshire and in a final desperate attempt even imported activists from London and Essex.

This was the BNP's third successive defeat since its victory in Goresbrook but anti-fascists should not become complacent. The BNP is now gearing up for the general election and will fight council by-elections not only to try to win seats but also to highlight its presence in an area.

Sandwell by-election results

November 2004

Party	Votes	%
Labour	1,087	42.3
Conservative	778	30.3
BNP	410	16.0
Lib Dem	293	11.4
		Turnout 29%

To support the Black Country UAF e-mail info@blackcountryunity.net or call 07960 553349.

STOP THE BNP LOCAL CONTACTS

North West

Blackburn & Darwen United Against Racism
PO Box 632, Blackburn
BB4 4WT

Bolton Against Racism
c/o Bolton and District CAB
26-28 Mawdsley Street
Bolton BL1 1LF
www.boltonagainstracism.org.uk

Burnley Against Fascism
PO Box 358, Burnley,
BB11 2WA

Bury Against Racism/ United Against Fascism
karen.evans@virgin.net
Tel: 07974 400183

Hyndburn Against Racism
Hyndburn-against-racism@fsmail.net

Merseyside Coalition Against Racism and Fascism
c/o TGWU, 143 Sefton Street
Liverpool L8 5SN

Oldham United Against Racism
c/o Oldham Law Centre,
Archway House, Bridge Street,
Oldham OL1 1ED

Pendle UAF
PO Box 2027
Colne, Lancs BB8 0XA

Ribble Valley Against Racism
PO Box 95, Whalley,
Clitheroe BB7 9WW
www.rvar.org.uk

Rochdale United Against Fascism
Tel: 07815 144460

Wigan & Leigh United Against Racism
7 Alder Avenue, Worsley Hall
Wigan WN5 9PY
chitchen@fsi.li.man.ac.uk

Yorkshire & The Humber

Bradford Anti-Fascist Committee
Bradford TUC-AFC
c/o 17-21 Chapel St,
Bradford BD1 5DT
afc@bradfordtuc.org.uk

Calderdale Communities Against Racism and Calderdale Unity
c/o GMB Clifton House, Clifton Road,
Brighouse, HD6 1SL
calderdaleunity@yahoo.co.uk

Kirklees Unity
PO Box 310,
Huddersfield HD1 3YU

Leeds Unity
c/o Leeds NUT, West Park Centre,
Spen Lane, Leeds, LS16 5BG
leedsunity@hushmail.com

Sheffield Campaign Against Racism and Fascism
c/o Sheffield TUC,
Trades & Labour Club, Talbot Street,
Sheffield S2 2TG

Wakefield & Five Towns United Against Racism
PO Box 462, Wakefield WF2 7WW

York Unity
yorkunity@hotmail.com

Eastern

Broxbourne Against Racism
PO Box 13679, London N1 1AA
contact@broxar.org.uk

South East Essex Coalition Against Racism
c/o Searchlight Magazine
PO Box 1576, Ilford IG5 ONG

East Midlands

Communities Against Racism in Derbyshire (CARD)
c/o Derbyshire Unemployed
Workers Centre, 54 Saltergate,
Chesterfield S40 1JR

West Midlands

Dudley Unite Against Fascism
PO Box 9302, Smethwick B67 6JG
Tel: 07712 683023
dudley@blackcountryunity.net

Sandwell UAF
PO Box 9302, Smethwick B67 6JG
Tel: 07712 683023
sandwell@blackcountryunity.net

Wolverhampton, Bilston & District TUC
PO Box 2917,
Wolverhampton WV2 2YA
wolves.tuc@unisonfree.net

Walsall UAF
PO Box 9302, Smethwick B67 6JG
Tel: 07712 683023
walsall@blackcountryunity.net

North Staffordshire Campaign Against Racism & Fascism
PO Box 1960, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 1WF
NorSCARF@burslem.demon.co.uk

London

Enfield UAF
07812 179856 enfielduaf@coolift.com
www.enfielduniteagainstfascism.co.uk

North East

Gateshead Against the Nazis
6 Ellison Street, Gateshead
NE8 1AY
Tel: 0191-477-6638
unison@unisonfree.net

Sunderland Coalition Against Racism and Fascism
c/o Unison City of
Sunderland Branch
Grange Lodge, Grange Crescent
Sunderland SR2 7BN
team@unison-sc.ace.co.uk

Tees Valley Unites Against Racism
c/o GMB, Cleveland House,
7 Woodlands Road
Middlesbrough TS1 3BH

Tyne & Wear Anti-Fascist Association
c/o Unison, Room 145
Civic Centre
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8QH
0191 272 1211
twafa@twafa.org.uk

South East

Saltdean for Tolerance and Respect
PO Box 164, Brighton BN1 7WB

Wales

Wales Friends of Searchlight
Cardiff Centre for Trade Union Studies
182 Habershon Street
Splott, Cardiff CF24 2LE

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State of the BNP 2005

The year had begun with such promise. The British National Party was confidently expecting that 2004 would be when it broke into the political mainstream. But things did not end up as planned. At the beginning of what is likely to be a general election year, Nick Lowles assesses the state of the BNP.

Nick Griffin, heading an increasingly demoralised BNP
Photo: Martin Adolfsson/ Expo

The elections on 10 June 2004 were always going to be crucial. The BNP had been planning for the European, London Assembly and local elections for two years. A number of factors gave the party high hopes. The European election was being contested under proportional representation, boundary changes meant that every Metropolitan borough council seat was up for grabs and the voting system for the London Assembly ensured any party representation with just 5% of the vote. All this was set against an increasingly alienated electorate, an unpopular Government and an ineffective Opposition. There was never a better opportunity for the BNP to break the political mould.

Confidently, its leadership entered 2004 predicting the BNP would win three to five MEPs and at least 60 councillors.

Certainly the party's supporters believed that success was almost guaranteed and many were more than happy to provide the financial backing. In the 12 months to the June elections, the BNP raised over half a million pounds through membership fees, fundraising at local meetings and election donations.

But the expected breakthrough did not occur and the BNP has suffered ever since. The BNP has no MEPs and only achieved a net increase of four councillors. Its electoral failure has led to widespread demoralisation, increased internal bickering and allegations of financial incompetence.

While the leadership points to the 808,000 votes the BNP gained in the European election it knows full well that its failure to get MEPs and more councillors elected was a major setback. Many people had given money on the basis that victory was certain and some will be less generous in future. The demoralisation has led to many activists, especially the newer members, dropping out of activity.

The electoral defeat has also increased internal dissent. It has emboldened the opposition camp, led by the former BNP leader John Tyndall, to challenge Nick Griffin publicly for the leadership. At the same time other leading activists who have remained loyal to the party have begun publicly to question some of the leadership's tactics.

Party morale was not helped by the fiasco over the leadership's attempts to admit black members. Although this was dressed up as a necessary manoeuvre to stave off a legal challenge by the CRE (though no real threat actually existed), it owed more to a desperate attempt to make the BNP appear more respectable. Griffin was convinced by the "modernisers" into believing that the only way the party could succeed was to prove its non-racist credentials.

The leadership was forced into a humiliating climb down after an almost universal rank and file rejection. Griffin tried to distance himself from the original proposal and move on, despite vocally backing the motion at the party's advisory council, but much of the party was left mystified and annoyed.

Compounding the BNP's internal problems was the fallout from the BBC documentary *The Secret Agent*. As well as the 12 arrests so far, the programme encouraged the rightwing press eagerly to take up the anti-BNP message. For many new BNP members this was extremely uncomfortable and for some more respectable potential recruits it was off-putting.

Another direct consequence of the programme was the decision by Barclays Bank to close down the BNP bank accounts. HSBC followed soon afterwards. Their action not only reinforced the impression that the BNP was beyond the pale but has led to a host of financial

problems. Among them is the serious drop in standing orders to the party accounts.

The BNP has not helped its own case. Its repeated failure to deliver audited accounts for 2003 to the Electoral Commission, which it is legally obliged to do, leaves it exposed to a hefty fine and yet more negative publicity.

The BNP goes into 2005 in a weaker state than it was in 12 months ago. Its membership might have grown to a record 8,000 but, as was evident in last summer's elections, increasing membership does not automatically translate into greater activism or votes. The party is on the defensive in many key areas and the leadership is facing growing internal dissent which will not easily be dispelled. Poor results in a string of recent by-elections only confirm that the BNP has failed to build a post-June momentum.

With the general election dominating this year's political diary the BNP will step up activities. The main focus will be on Keighley, Bradford, Dewsbury, Burnley, Stoke and Barking & Dagenham.

Yet perhaps its best chance will be in the Stoke mayoral election, in which local BNP councillor Steve Batkin will stand again. In the first round of voting in 2002 Batkin came only 1,143 votes behind the eventual winner. Since then the BNP has grown substantially across the city.

But its internal crisis will not be easy to overcome. Much of the North West remains hostile to the Griffin leadership, while most London organisers and branches openly despise Tony Lecomber, the group development officer. Scotland BNP is hunting a mole within its ranks and personal feuds are debilitating the party in the North East. Dissent has also spread to the East Midlands, where several organisers are now backing Tyndall. Even in the Griffin heartland of Yorkshire, many are unhappy. Bradford BNP has still not recovered from the *Secret Agent* programme and Calderdale's leading BNP councillor, Richard Mulhall, is openly critical of the leadership.

Some politicians are already beginning to write off the BNP. That would be foolish. While the party has not performed well in recent by-elections and there are clear indications that it is on the wane in several of its key areas, it is far too early to ignore the threat it poses. The conditions that have given rise to its success in recent years are still present and, as was evident in its by-election victory in Dagenham last September, it continues to build up political momentum in many new areas.

Even in Burnley, where they BNP won one and lost one council seat in June, it would be a grave mistake to say that its bubble has burst. The year following the previous elections in May 2003 could not have been worse for Burnley BNP, with internal disputes, the loss of two councillors and a poor council record. Yet the party still obtained 28% of the vote in the wards it contested and 16.7% across the town in the European election.

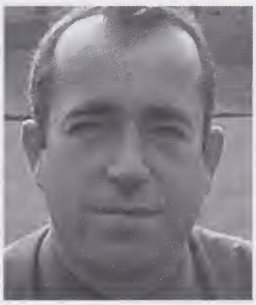
The truth is that the BNP can often do well despite itself.

For anti-fascists, the work goes on and there is certainly no room for complacency. We achieved a huge success against the BNP in the 2004 elections but this was a tactical rather than a political victory. Not only do we have to continue improving our election techniques, we also need to begin the longer-term work to challenge the BNP in its core areas. This will be a hard fight but it is one we have to win if we are to rid our society of the BNP cancer.

But we go into that fight with confidence. We have won one battle and winning another will further demoralise and fracture the BNP.

Scott McLean

Tony Lecomber


Simon Darby

Eddy Butler

Martin Wingfield

Julie Russell

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Deputy Chairman	Scott McLean
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Treasurer	John Walker
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Legal Team	Lee Barnes
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Overseas Liaison	Julie Russell
Deputy Treasurer	Mark Payne
Student BNP	Tony Wentworth
Young BNP	Jenny Griffin
Education Officer	Jonathan Bowden

Leadership

The leader of the BNP is Nick Griffin, a Cambridge law graduate, who lives on a farm near Welshpool, Wales. He replaced John Tyndall in September 1999 after winning an acrimonious leadership contest.

Griffin heads an advisory council that meets three times a year. His right-hand man is Tony Lecomber, who is responsible for the development of party branches.

In internal publications the BNP claims 29 staff, though some of them are part-time. However, its last return to the Electoral Commission in 2002 stated that it had only three members of staff.

Membership

The BNP has 8,000 members. In 1999, when Griffin took over, the BNP had about 1,200 members. In the 2004 local and European election campaign it received enquiries from almost 10,000 people, of whom over 2,000 joined.

Political factions

There are three main factions within the BNP and there has been increasing tension between them.

■ **Traditionalists** – These are the hardcore BNP followers, best personified by John Tyndall, the former leader and founder of the party founder. These people are uncompromising in their support for an all-white Britain, believe that the Holocaust did not happen and accept notions of a Jewish conspiracy. Leading traditionalists are John Tyndall, Richard Edmonds and Bob Gertner.

■ **Populists** – This group will do whatever it believes it needs to do to gain political power. Griffin is in this faction. He remains politically hardcore but will adopt any gimmick or tactic if he believes it will further his or the BNP's policies. This group represents the majority of the party, most of whom privately still aspire to an all-white Britain but publicly tell voters that they have changed. Leading populists are Griffin, Simon Darby and Stuart Russell.

■ **Modernisers** – Though small this faction is highly influential within the BNP. This group wants to turn the BNP into a Euro-nationalist party devoid of any links with nazi extremism. It was this group that was behind the failed attempt to get the BNP to allow non-whites to become members of the party. The modernisers saw this as a necessary measure towards changing the party. The populists initially backed the idea because they saw it as a way of dismissing the charge that the BNP was racist. When the majority of activists opposed the move the populists backed down and withdrew their support. Leading modernisers are Eddy Butler, Tony Lecomber, Martin Wingfield and Colin Smith.

Paul Cromie, one of the BNP's big funders

Publications

The BNP produces a monthly magazine, *Identity*, and a monthly newspaper, *Voice of Freedom*. The newspaper has normally been given out free door-to-door in key target areas but more recently the party decided to stop this and direct branches to door-to-door sales and even town centre paper sales.

Identity is edited by the veteran nationalist John Bean, while *Freedom* is edited by the former National Front and National Democrat activist Martin Wingfield.

There is also an internal monthly news bulletin for party members called *British Nationalist*. This is edited by Kenny Smith, from Scotland. He recently took over from Birmingham-based Robert Purcell.

Internet

The internet has become the party's main interface with the general public. The BNP website claims thousands of hits a day and has been central to the party's election campaigns in the past year. However, hackers attacked

Who funds the BNP?

The BNP has declared the following donations over £1,000 to the Electoral Commission.

Donor	Date	Donation (£)
Anthony North	16.04.03	1,500.00
Donald Campbell	03.06.03	1,000.01
Paul Cromie	16.08.03	1,325.00
Glen Jones	24.09.03	1,000.01
Adam Chamneys	05.12.03	5,220.00
Adam Chamneys	08.12.03	1,000.01
Steven Roberts	17.12.03	1,000.01
Robert Gertner	17.12.03	1,290.00
John Brayshaw	31.12.03	1,210.00
Edward C. Pithers	09.01.04	1,000.01
Alan Carter	27.01.04	1,000.01
Janet Ingram	29.01.04	1,002.00
Denis Driscoll	06.02.04	1,100.00
Paul Ford	13.02.04	1,000.01
James F Connolly	24.02.04	1,100.00
Creswell Rice	25.02.04	1,000.01
Rosemarie Boursier	25.02.04	1,000.01
Joseph Owens	26.02.04	1,000.01
Andrew Lunt	26.02.04	1,000.01
Richard Purdy	17.03.04	1,000.01
Leslie G. E. Brannan	17.03.04	1,000.01
Andrew Robertson	20.03.04	3,450.00
Albert Leech	29.03.04	1,000.01
Herbert A Sarney	30.03.04	7,861.97
John Walker	05.04.04	1,010.00
Robert Gertner	13.04.04	1,000.01
Bernard Creswell	13.04.04	1,000.01
Joseph Owens	13.04.04	1,000.01
Leslie Brannan	15.04.04	5,000.00
Paul Cromie	10.05.04	1,248.68
Sidney Lee	28.05.04	1,950.00
Bernard Corrigan	01.06.04	1,000.01
John Brayshaw	02.06.04	1,511.00
Peter Francis	18.06.04	1,150.00

Regional organisers

Scotland	Kenny Smith
Northern Ireland	Andy McLorie
North East	Kevin Scott
North Riding	Ian Dawson
West Riding	Chris Beverley
East Riding	Ian Smith
North West	Bev Jones
West Midlands	Simon Darby
East Midlands	Sadie Graham
South West	Tony North
South East	John Millican
London	Richard Barnbrook
Eastern	Diane Smith
North Wales	John Walker
South Wales	Rebecca Host

the website on at least two occasions last autumn, forcing it to close while the party sought a new webserver. It has since been relaunched by its new editor, Stirling-based Steve Blake, but it is a far inferior site.

The regional voices section of the website, which allows local branches to report on their activities, is edited by Martin Wingfield.

Circles/groups

The BNP has a number of groups within the party which specialise in certain topics. However, many of them exist only on paper.

Darren James, an agricultural student from the South West, runs the Land and People group. This group has its own section on the party website and has produced several editions of a four-page newspaper, *The Countrysider*.

South London-based Colin Smith runs the ethnic liaison committee. Smith was recently embroiled in controversy when he and other "modernisers" tried to get the party to accept non-white people into party membership. This was roundly opposed by most activists.

The BNP has been keen to recruit ex-servicemen and women. They have established the Association of Ex-Servicemen (ABEX) but this is one of those circles that exists only on paper.

Youth wing

The Young BNP is led by Jennifer Griffin and the party has a student wing under the leadership of Tony Wentworth. Apart from a few leaflets and the occasional social gathering, both groups seem to do little. However, the party has achieved considerable publicity over its claims that it has dozens of students in its ranks. Further media investigation revealed that in many cases the BNP's presence in a school amounted to no more than a single enquiry.

Centres of activity

BNP support continues to be strongest in East Lancashire and West Yorkshire, with Burnley, Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees its central bases. However, in many other areas of the North West, including Oldham and Blackburn, the party has slipped back due to fierce anti-fascist opposition and internal disputes.

In Yorkshire, the BNP is expanding rapidly into South Yorkshire and the region's growing importance is demonstrated by the appointment of local organiser Ian Smith onto the party's advisory council.

Stoke-on-Trent is the party's best prospect in the West Midlands although it continues to enjoy considerable support in the Black Country despite several councillors losing their seats.

A rapidly emerging BNP stronghold is outer east and northeast London and the surrounding towns. The BNP now has five councillors in this region and with the all-out London elections in 2006 will be making a substantial push in the capital.

BNP support has traditionally been focused on urban working class areas in traditional Labour regions but the European elections highlighted growing support for the party in more rural areas. Over the next year we expect to see considerably more BNP activity in the East Midlands as it strives to tap into this support.

Steve Batkin

Len Starr

David Exley

Councillors

The BNP presently has 22 borough councillors and 2 town councillors.

The borough councillors are

Barking & Dagenham	Goresbrook	David Kelley
Bradford	Worth Valley	Chris Kirby
Bradford	Wyke	James Lewthwaite
Bradford	Keighley West	Angela Clarke
Bradford	Wibsey	Arthur Redfearn
Broxbourne	Rosdale	Ramon Johns
Burnley	Gannow	Carol Hughes
Burnley	Hapton-w-Park	Len Starr
Burnley	Hapton-w-Park	Sharon Wilkinson
Burnley	Cliviger-w-Worsthorne	Brian Turner
Burnley	Whittlefield-w-Ightenhill	Barry Birks
Burnley	Briercliffe	Patricia Thompson
Calderdale	Illingworth-w-Mixenden	Richard Mulhall
Calderdale	Illingworth-w-Mixenden	Geoffrey Wallace
Calderdale	Town	Adrian Marsden
Epping	Loughton Alderton	Terry Farr
Epping	Loughton Broadway	Thomas Richardson
Epping	Loughton Fairmead	Patricia Richardson
Kirklees	Heckmondwike	David Exley
Sandwell	Princes End	James Lloyd
Stoke-on-Trent	Longton North	Steve Batkin
Stoke-on-Trent	Longton North	Mark Leat

The town councillors are

Keighley	Guardhouse	Angela Clarke
Mirfield	Hopton	Roger Roberts

State of the right

National Front

The National Front has continued to decline over the past year. It has lost members to the BNP and White Nationalist Party and simply as a result of dire disorganisation. It now has active units only in north-east Scotland, the North East and west and south London. Even in its one-time stronghold of Birmingham, the NF is largely inactive.

It only managed to field seven candidates in last summer's local elections, five in the North East and two in Birmingham. In both Birmingham wards the NF went head to head with the BNP and polled poorly.

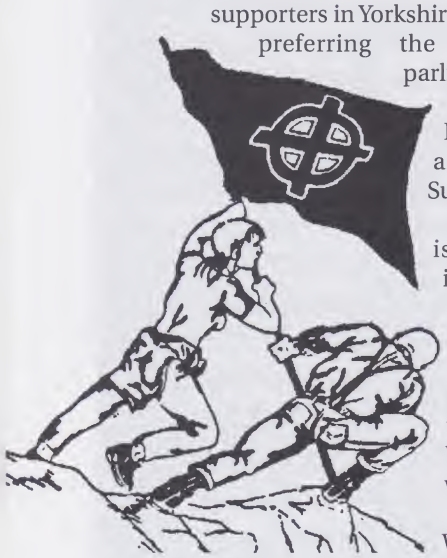
The party has tried to hold marches in Stoke, Aberdeen, Peterborough, Bermondsey and Kent, but they are either banned by police or poorly attended. Its largest mobilisation of last year was about 50 supporters who attended an anti-Islam rally in Trafalgar Square.

The party continues to be run by Terry Blackham, Tom Holmes and Bernard Franklin. Most of its publications are produced by Ken Foot in Newcastle.

White Nationalist Party

At the beginning of 2004 it appeared that the White Nationalist Party was emerging as a hardline challenge to the BNP but it enters 2005 as yet another minuscule split-ridden nazi party. Its early promise has been shattered by political and personal disputes in Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

Some of the original organisers of the WNP envisaged a political force that could attract the more hardline elements in the BNP but at the same time have enough respectability to contest elections. However many supporters in Yorkshire deeply opposed this strategy, preferring the WNP to be an extra-parliamentary force. The politicos, led by the WNP's founder Eddy Morrison, walked out and formed the Spearhead Support Group.



One area of real WNP activity is Northern Ireland, where its supporters have been involved in the harassment of, and violence against, the province's ethnic minority population. There are also worrying links between the WNP and hardline elements within the UDA.

The WNP is now led by Roger Wood and Kevin Watmough.

England First Party

The England First Party is the brainchild of Blackburn-based Mark Cotterill, who until earlier this year was active in the WNP. Cotterill was always more interested in the political route and quickly became disillusioned with the WNP. However, his decision to launch the EFP did not please the International Third Position, which had its own grouping called England First.

The EFP has stood in four council elections in Blackburn and Preston, the two places where it currently appears active. Cotterill has also used the party to continue his long-running feud with the BNP, a party to which he was attached until early 2003.

There appears little prospect of the EFP breaking out of its Lancashire base but a meeting Cotterill held last month with the US racial eugenicist Jim Libinski and John Tyndall, the founder and former leader of the BNP, highlights Cotterill's continued importance on the right of the BNP.

Combat 18

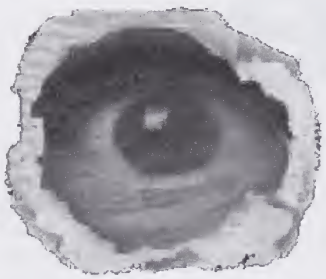
It seems a very long time ago since Combat 18 dominated the British right with gigs attracting 500 people and political meetings of 100. Today, C18 has been reduced to a core of 20-25 people, with about the same number peripherally involved. It continues to be led by Will Browning but is little more than a social drinking club.

Frustration with the group's lack of activity prompted some supporters, led by Mark Atkinson, a long-time leading C18 activist, and Oldham-based John Hill, to form the Racial Volunteer Force. However police raids hampered its ability to organise. Atkinson fled to Spain and Hill drifted back to the pub.

C18 continues to host intermittent music gigs but relies on foreign skinheads, notably from Germany, to boost numbers. It retains international links but even these have diminished as police action, internal feuds and political incompetence have impaired most of its sister organisations. The death of Marcel Schilf, its Scandinavian street boss, in 2002 heralded the rapid decline of C18 in the region.

Redwatch

A spin-off from Combat 18 and the WNP, the infamous Redwatch website, which posts personal details of the fascists' opponents, has been largely inactive since Searchlight exposed its organisers' activities in November 2003. It had been expected that once the European and local elections were out of the way hostilities would be resumed but this has not occurred. The BNP now discourages members from posting information (whereas once leading organisers did so on a regular basis) and the hatred felt by the site's organisers towards the BNP is such that a link is not actively sought.



Blood and Honour

The nazi music scene continues to host gigs and socials on a fairly regular basis but it is increasingly a peripheral player on the British right. For most of those involved it has become a social activity. Many of Blood and Honour's key organisers are active in the BNP and the British Movement, rather than having a separate political identity as is the case in much of the rest of Europe. This is partly explained by the BNP's attempts to distance itself from Blood and Honour as it bids to become respectable, but is also the result of changing music fashions which have led to very few young people getting involved.

Blood and Honour is run by Steve Swinfen from Northants and Simon Dutton from west London. Other influential organisers are Benny Bullman and Micky Lane, both involved in the British Movement. Blood and Honour Scotland is run by Jamie Hunter and Steve Cartwright and the Glasgow-based pair also run the Highlander CD mail order business.

Current bands include Nemesis, Brutal Attack, Celtic Warrior, Spearhead, Eye of Odin and Legion of St George.

British Movement

The British Movement continues to exist but does little except produce a quarterly magazine, *Broadsword*, hold an annual general meeting and the occasional other meeting. It remains rooted in southeast London, the Notts/Derby border and West Yorkshire.

The BM counts about 80-120 supporters but most are veterans of the movement and largely inactive. Some of its key organisers are active in Blood and Honour, while Dartford-based Micky Lane also leads the Midguard Comitatus bike gang.

Freedom Party

The Freedom Party brings together former BNP activists with elements of the far-right discussion group, the Bloomsbury Forum. However, despite early expectations the FP has failed to break out of its Black Country base, where former BNP organisers Steve and Sharron Edwards are based.

Last year saw the group contest only one by-election in Sandwell, West Midlands, where one of its three candidates only just failed to get elected. In 2003 Sharron Edwards was elected to South Staffordshire district council and as a parish councillor in Wombourne South West.

Two other active branches exist. The Market Harborough group is led by the former BNP organiser Dave Ball and the second is a new unit based in Kent run by the former BNP and Tory Stuart Millson.

Centrally, the FP is run by Adrian Davies, supported by Millson and Mike Newland, a former treasurer of the BNP. However, it has lost of several key people, including its former chairman Jonathan Bowden, to the BNP.

In April, the FP formed a loose alliance with the Third Way and the English Democrats under the banner the English Lobby. Its Statement of Principles calls for withdrawal from the EU, the restoration of county boundaries and the promotion of English identity and self-determination.

Bloomsbury Forum

A self-styled intellectual discussion house for Britain's far right, the Bloomsbury Forum unites far-right conservatives, the BNP and the Freedom Party. A meeting in November last year, around the theme "where now for nationalism", attracted a wide range of political opinions, but some non-aligned extremists, such as Martin Webster, the high profile national organiser of the National Front in the 1970s, complained that the debate was too heavily focused around the internal feuds within the BNP.

While the group has no power whatsoever, its key organisers are prominent in a number of right-wing organisations. Among them are Chris Roberts, Jonathan Bowden (both BNP), Adrian Davies (Freedom Party) and Sam Swerling.

November 9th Society

The November 9th Society has little more than 20 active members though it has achieved considerable local and national publicity over the past two years. Its present leader is Bedford-based Ken Quinn, who replaced the group's founder Terry Flynn in 2000.

Since then Quinn, who is a web designer by trade, has eagerly promoted the organisation across the country. If press reports are to be believed then the November 9th Society would have active units across the country. Happily most of them do not exist outside Quinn's warped mind and the organisation remains rooted in the Home Counties.

Hate, lies and videotape

After the British National Party's website took a fatal blow back in October thanks to the computer group "Hack Army", Steve Blake, the BNP's internet editor, was ordered by the BNP leadership to carry out a complete relaunch. But this has gone far from smoothly. Just a quick browse at the pro-BNP mouthpiece "Stormfront-Britain" clearly demonstrates the membership's displeasure at the new site.

One of the first postings is by the new Bury organiser, Jonathan Barbour, under the pseudonym "England my England". His comments are short and to the point. "What do you think of the new website? Well I think its crap!"

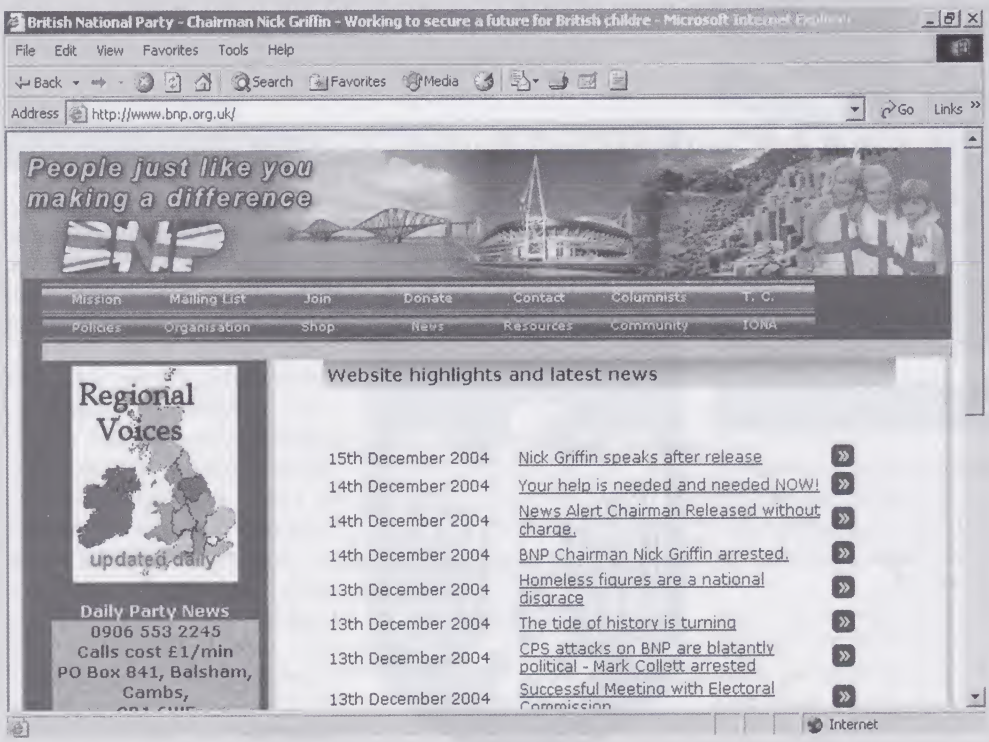
Large parts of the site still do not work and the regional pages have been severely cut back, once again limiting what little say the regions actually have. But one part of the site that seems to be receiving more attention than others is the multimedia section. This had been drastically curtailed over the past 18 months because of a sustained campaign by anti-fascists. The BNP had been hosting hundreds of radio and TV clips referring to the BNP without permission from the media companies that owned them. When informed, the radio and TV companies threatened the BNP with legal action and the multimedia section disappeared almost overnight.

Now, in a part of the website rather optimistically titled "BNP-TV" the BNP leadership has put out a call to branches around the country to supply Blake with videos of meetings and events so that they are available for anybody to watch. It declares: "This concept could, in a short space of time, offer a genuine alternative to the outpourings from the anti-white racists and politically correct Marxists who control 'mainstream' TV today".

The BNP also offers a guide to video production written by the fancifully named Camden organiser Roderick Gordon. This is basically a "dummies' guide" aimed at anybody with a digital video camera and a computer.

It appears that Nick Griffin, the BNP leader, and Blake were looking for slick propaganda videos to put on the website. What has actually appeared is wide of the mark. First up is a poorly produced Flash animation with musical accompaniment by Stigger, the notorious Combat 18 thug and former member of the nazi band Skrewdriver. Oh how things have changed for Steve Calladine. He must be crying in his beer at the thought of how a man who used to be part of the world's best known nazi band is now reduced to supplying the soundtrack for cartoons.

Next on the list of offerings is what can only be called a slide show of a recent Blackpool meeting set to operatic music. Produced by David Shapcott, the Burnley and Lancashire organiser, who is known for his love of the amber nectar, it features appearances from Griffin alongside the BNP's North West regional organiser Bev Jones, also known as Bev Scott.



BNP website home of BNP TV

Shapcott, always seen with either a camera or a pint in his hand, fancies himself as a bit of a media expert. But he has also fallen foul of copyright law. His own "Britconger" website was shut down following complaints by Dido's record company that Shapcott was hosting illegal copies of Dido's songs and alleging that they had racist meanings.

Then there is a short video shot at a recent meeting in Broxbourne. We get to see councillor Ramon Johns, dressed all in purple looking like a second hand car salesman. Also on the film are the two Epping Forest councillors Tom and Pat Richardson. You can see Tom is not used to this sort of thing as he splutters through his speech and has to be prompted by his wife because he cannot remember what

he has to say. Pat Richardson brings the proceedings to an end by rather strangely calling the BNP way of doing things the correct way.

Maybe she needs to open her eyes a little wider, as most of her colleagues in the BNP do not want her in their party, because she is Jewish.

A video shot in Goresbrook is the next treat. It shows how the BNP can parachute in activists from outside an area to take part in a propaganda exercise. Once again the Richardsons make an appearance together with the London activists Julian Leppert and Bob Gertner. The video is introduced by the Mosleyite BNP London regional organiser Richard Barnbrook, slightly slurring his words and looking as if he had just been to bed in his one and only suit.

The best is kept to the end. A video with the title "Entente cordiale". shows the BNP visiting members of the fascist Front National in France. On the ferry journey, Griffin gives a short history lecture on Horatio Nelson and the battle of Copenhagen. The narrator then has the cheek to compare Griffin to Nelson, pointing out that both men only had one eye. That is indeed all that the war hero and the convicted criminal have in common.

Like the BNP's new website, BNP-TV is a flop from start to finish and will surely have only a limited lifespan.

As *Searchlight* was about to go to press another interesting video was added to BNP-TV. It is a ten minute film of Burnley BNP's "Christmas Cabaret", shot at the Hob and Gill club in Burnley.

It starts with the presentation of a rather cheap looking tankard for Councillor Len Starr for "loyal" services to the party. This is the cue for Starr to go into a five minute speech about the forthcoming general election, in which he is standing as the BNP candidate for Burnley. He tries to persuade the audience that he just might have a chance of winning, but looks like he hasn't quite convinced himself yet.

Another presentation follows, this time to Joan Shapcott, wife of the Burnley organiser, consisting of a bunch of flowers that look like they had come straight off a garage forecourt.

We are then treated to Karaoke BNP-style. Two women proceed to murder the classic Simon and Garfunkel hit *Mrs Robinson*. The irony of Simon and Garfunkel both being Jewish is totally missed. It was a good job Griffin and his rival John Tyndall weren't there to witness this crime against the "white race".

The contradictions do not stop there. Next up is a rather portly gentleman with an out of tune version of Will Young's hit song *Evergreen*. Burnley BNP must have missed Young coming out as a gay man.

Then the disco began, and what was everyone was dancing to? The classic hit *Rescue Me* by the black soul singer Fontella Bass. If you listen carefully you can just hear some joker say to the DJ, "I wouldn't play any Bob Marley here, you might get lynched".

Blake describes the people of Burnley BNP as "thoroughly decent, wholesome and hard-working". He can't have watched this video.

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BNP chief arrested

WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE arrested British National Party leader Nick Griffin last month as a result of the screening of the BBC programme, *The Secret Agent*. Griffin was taken from his Welsh farmhouse and driven to Halifax for questioning.

Also arrested were the former BNP leader John Tyndall and a key Yorkshire organiser Mark Collett. Tyndall was apprehended after a Spearhead Support Group social in Blackburn and Collett was picked up at his Leeds home.

All three are alleged to have made speeches that incited racial hatred. They were questioned and released pending further investigation.

The arrests came as West Yorkshire police charged three men detained earlier following the undercover documentary. A number of others were released without charge.

Griffin's arrest sparked an impromptu demonstration by BNP followers outside Halifax police station. The party claimed that 173 people took part but TV footage and journalists reported no more than 40. Among them were BNP activists from across Yorkshire and the North West.

Griffin used his arrest to announce his intention to challenge David Blunkett, shortly before he resigned as Home Secretary, in his Sheffield Brightside seat at the general election. Griffin's decision surprised some people, because Sheffield is not one of the BNP's key areas, but Searchlight believes it is a sign of the BNP's current weakness and low expectations for the general election.

A year ago the BNP was confidently expecting to challenge strongly in several constituencies. Its poor showing in last summer's local elections and its failure to get Griffin elected to the European Parliament have dampened the party's hopes. It had been believed that Griffin would stand in Keighley, where allegations of Asian gangsterism have featured strongly in recent BNP propaganda, but the decision to switch to Sheffield was a recognition that the party had little prospect of winning.

The Sheffield seat would have been a high profile contest with a Home Secretary who the BNP claimed was soft on asylum and law and order. Perhaps more importantly, Labour so dominates the constituency that Griffin stood a good chance of coming second, giving the BNP a publicity coup not guaranteed elsewhere. Sheffield has also witnessed growing BNP support in recent years and Brightside specifically has been targeted in successive local elections.

This decision might now change following Blunkett's resignation but Griffin's options are running out. Most of the key BNP target constituencies already have candidates selected and it is unlikely that Griffin will challenge the new Home Secretary in his Norwich seat. That would take him away from the party's northern base and the party polled poorly there in the European election.

Tyndall expelled

JOHN TYNDALL has once again been expelled from the British National Party. At an internal disciplinary hearing in Essex early last month he was found guilty on seven counts of breaking party rules.

This was little surprise and Tyndall has already indicated that he intends to take legal action against his expulsion. He will plead that some of the articles for which he was found guilty were written during a previous expulsion period, therefore not when he was in the party, and other charges related to articles and incidents a long time ago.

Tyndall had been expelled in summer 2003 but legal action forced his reinstatement. This cost the BNP £12,000, a loss it hopes not to repeat. However the BNP's case will be undermined by an email from Tony Lecomber, the party's group development officer and key instigator behind the expulsion, to veteran nazi Martin Webster shortly before the tribunal hearing.

"I'm in the last phase of, i hope, finally getting rid of tyndall from the bnp," Lecomber wrote. "After which there will no doubt be a court battle over the matter which i'm sure he will lose.

"I plan to write a small biography/exposure of the great man covering his political career. ... I should say now right from the off that this little project has got nothing to do with Nick. It's about my personal loathing and contempt for tyndall, who in my opinion has cost us 20-25 years ... Tyndall has cost us dearly.

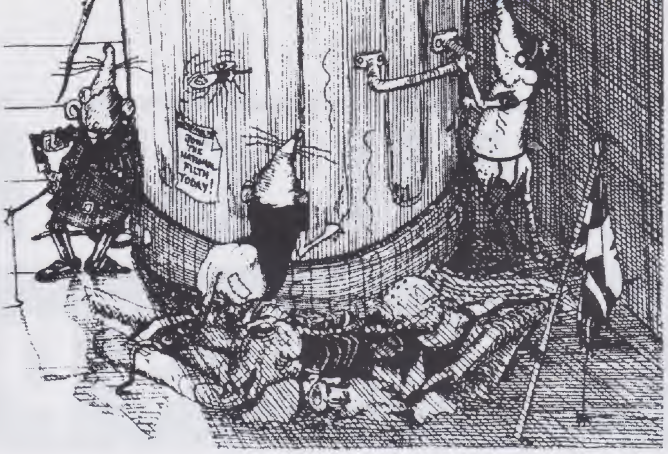
"Such material as you could provide would be highly desirable since it covers the period you knew him and I didn't ... Will you help out on this one?"

In the meantime Tyndall has been building his support across the country. Three recent events in Milton Keynes, Lincoln and Blackburn demonstrate the small but growing support he is receiving within the party. The Lincoln meeting was especially welcome for the Tyndall camp as it was organised by the local BNP organiser Mick Holmes. However, as soon as the BNP leadership learnt of Holmes's support for Tyndall he was dismissed from his post and is threatened with expulsion from the party.

The BNP has also been taking action to prevent further internal dissent. New constitutional changes include forcing party members to agree not to take legal proceedings against the party as a result of disciplinary action. Whether this is legal is highly questionable.

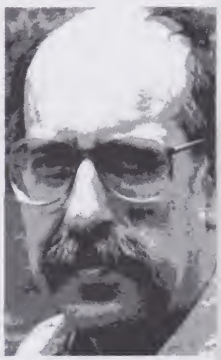
The action against Tyndall continues to mystify everyone. It looks draconian and causes division within the ranks. Quite why Griffin did not accept Tyndall's challenge for the leadership and resoundingly beat him once and for all will long be debated.

Arrested and expelled, John Tyndall on hard times



News from the sewers

Awful in the underworld



by Gerry Gable

AROUND 100 LONDON and Home Counties British National Party officers and members gathered for their Yuletide Fest in the Orpheus English restaurant and bar near Mincing Lane on 3 December. The supposedly private event received a lot more publicity, largely unwelcome, than the organisers had bargained for.

The following Monday morning the front page of the *Daily Mirror* splashed the headline BNPathetic and revealed to the world that the party organisers had hired a black DJ to run the evening's entertainment. Tony Lecomber, the BNP's group development officer and "regulator" (witch-finder general?), claimed they had hired him via a commercial agency, not knowing whom they would get, and once he had arrived they felt they could not ask him to leave.

Lecomber failed to convince many tried and trusted party members, who voted with their feet not on the dance floor but out of the building. A larger group stayed but moved as far away as humanly possible from the DJ and muttered among themselves about what the party was coming to.

It was Bob Gertner, organiser of Croydon BNP, who was foolhardy enough to relay some of his disdain to the *Mirror*. As a result he was sacked as the BNP London media spokesperson and replaced with wannabe legal eagle Lee Barnes who, as Gertner puts it, does not even live in London but is after all a Griffin loyalist and one of the advocates of race mixing within the BNP, otherwise known as the admission of black members.

Although the BNP website described the buffet, for which participants shelled out £12, as the best for a long time, many people there felt the sausages and sandwiches were a bit disappointing, in contrast perhaps to the DJ, whom the website described as "most professional".

On the sidelines a strange new style of cabaret was playing, consisting of three men engaged in high stakes poker with one losing over £1,500.

Richard Barnbrook, who has proclaimed that he will fight the Labour-held Dagenham constituency at the general election while remaining BNP London organiser, grew more and more angry as the evening went on, as he failed to find many volunteers for an early start at his first day of action the next morning in Dagenham.

The evening was marked by the absence of the BNP's new councillor in Barking and Dagenham, David Kelley.

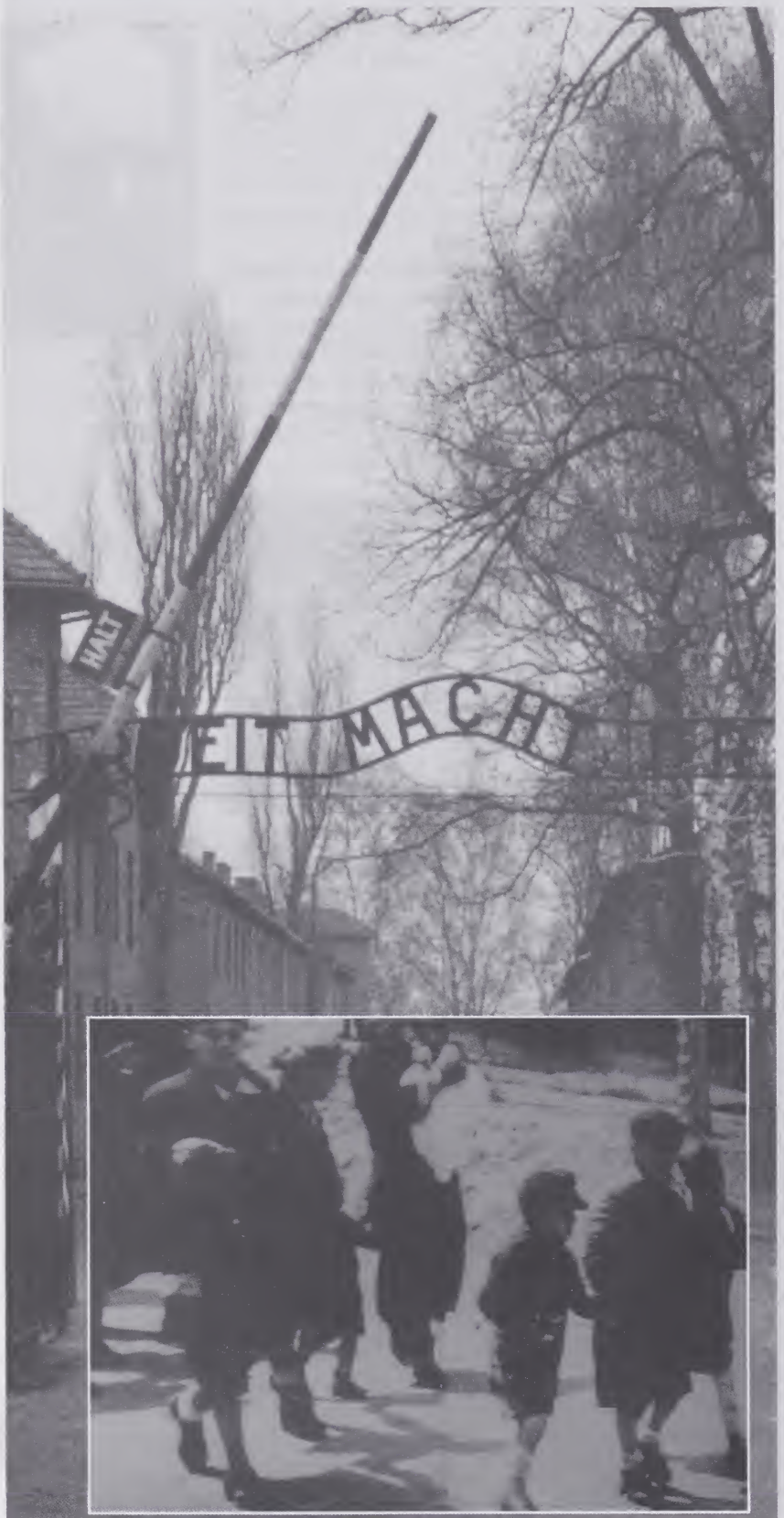
This was not the first time the BNP had held events at this ethnically correct venue in the City of London. The restaurant played host to at least one Valentine's Day gig. We understand that when the police visited to talk to the management about the BNP's use of the place, the officers were shown the door because the BNP appears to be a welcome guest.

Bob Gertner (centre) regretting that the BNP allowed cameras into its London social

Tony "Mad Bomber" Lecomber cosies up to the DJ. To the left is Alan Bailey, the over handy organiser of the BNP's Havering group

A MERE DETAIL OF H

The Secret Agent's pu



Paul Meszaros interviews Andy Sykes

The anti-fascist mole who brought Bradford BNP to its knees has had an interesting few months since his "outing" on the BBC documentary *The Secret Agent*. In between dodging numerous death threats, one of which resulted in a court awarding him £100 damages, Andy Sykes has been speaking at events and assisting the anti-BNP crusade in Bradford.

Recently he was introduced to a full meeting of Bradford Council at which 86 of the 90 councillors praised his courage and determination in exposing the evil of the nazis in our midst. Unsurprisingly, the four BNP councillors did not seem too pleased. Then again they are a particularly odd minority. Their most recent self-inflicted stupidity was an attempt to gag the local press. Thankfully willingness to defend our democratic traditions has galvanised all other politicians locally into adopting a hardline stance where these nazis are concerned.

Sykes has been particularly inspired by his recent trip to Auschwitz to see for himself the remnants of the Nazi

Anti-fascist mole Andy Sykes (right) with the French Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who described the Holocaust as a mere detail of history. Left: the reality of the Nazi death camps

-ISTORY?
ublic work

death camps. In an exclusive interview for *Searchlight* Sykes spoke to Paul Meszaros of Bradford TUC about his recent experiences and plans for the future.

How did you get to go to Poland?
I was invited by the Sefton Project, which aims to educate young people about the Holocaust. The project is sponsored by the trade union Unison.

Who else went on the trip?
We were accompanied by Unison organisers and school kids from different places. We were also honoured to have with us the Auschwitz survivor Arek Hersh, whose book, *A Detail of History*, tells the story of his life including his time in the death camps.

Did you realise that the title of Arek's book was a reference to the French Nazi leader Jean-Marie Le Pen?
Yes and I was particularly pleased to expose the BNP and their French nazi friends, because it was Le Pen who referred to the Holocaust as a mere detail of history.

What did you expect to learn from the trip?
I thought I would learn a great deal because it was not a subject we really covered at school and in adult life it's not something you really talk about.

Can you describe some of what you saw?
I was shocked by the scale of Auschwitz. I imagined some sort of prisoner of war camp but in reality it was a sprawling camp of death and torture. The images that you see on films about the war become more real. I felt really sad that so many people knew what was going on in these camps but nobody lifted a finger to try and help or rescue these poor souls. Seeing the conditions the prisoners had to survive in makes you realise how lucky we are.

Were there any particularly poignant moments or experiences?
One was when Arek told us about the sadistic SS officers' methods of killing children and babies – in one instance around 600 children were stripped, viciously beaten with coshes, kicked and punched and then taken into the gas chambers and murdered.

We actually went inside one of the gas chambers, which made me feel incredibly sad, seeing them all intact and knowing that there was no one to help the people who found themselves inside and that thousands of men, women and children died within those walls. Our guide gave a reading and everybody said a silent prayer for the souls who lost their lives.

During the tour, we went into a museum and saw a display case full of baby clothes and shoes from murdered children. As a parent, this really disturbed me and brought up lots of emotions.

I remember unbuttoning my coat and taking off my gloves to really feel how cold the temperature was and thinking about how it must have been for the prisoners working in the thinnest of uniforms at temperatures below minus 20 degrees.

One of the most chilling things was knowing that this industrial killing machine, which systematically murdered innocent people, was operated by scientists, doctors and engineers – some of the most intelligent people of their generation.

Would you say the trip has made a difference to you?
Definitely. It has given me a different outlook on life, put things in proportion. When you think of the professional people who ran these death camps and then you look at the suited, well-spoken, wealthy types who run far-right operations today it makes you shudder.

What do you intend to do now?
I intend to dedicate myself to speaking to young people in schools and colleges, explaining exactly what took place in Auschwitz and other camps around Europe, and drawing the links to the far right today, as we must never let history repeat itself. I am also looking forward to helping Bradford TUC in its struggle against the BNP.

Bradford TUC is currently drawing up a project for Andy to work in schools and highlight the dangers of the far right.

■ **Bradford TUC's campaign against the nazis continues. To get in touch contact afc@bradfordtuc.org.uk.**

UK government discriminated against Roma

by Kate Taylor

In a huge blow to the UK's human rights record, the law lords ruled last month that the UK government acted unlawfully in preventing Czech Roma entering the UK from the Czech Republic.

The government had experimented with a new "pre-clearance" system for passengers leaving Prague airport for Britain because of concern about the number of asylum applications coming from Czech nationals. Between 1998 and 2000 that number more than doubled from 515 to 1,200. The vast majority of applicants were Roma, whose situation in the Czech Republic was dire. They suffered high levels of unemployment and poverty, and racist attacks by skinheads were rife. So severe were conditions that in some cases they reached the level of "persecution", according to the law lords. But this was not reflected in decisions to grant asylum, which were particularly low for this group.

In an attempt to reduce the number of asylum applications from the Czech Republic, the British and Czech governments entered into an agreement in 2001 under which the UK would station immigration officers at Prague airport to screen all passengers travelling to the UK. The purpose was to prevent asylum seekers from leaving the Czech Republic. However those stopped were overwhelmingly Roma, regardless of whether they intended to claim asylum or not.

From July 2001, British immigration officers would "pre-clear" travellers either granting or refusing them leave to enter the UK. In the first three weeks of the operation, 110 people were refused leave to enter at Prague Airport. Among them were six Czech Roma who, together with the European Roma Rights Centre, brought a case against the UK government alleging racial discrimination.

The High Court and Court of Appeal had asserted that the operation was "no more or less objectionable" than a visa control system. The High Court in 2002 ruled that the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees did not stop Britain taking steps to prevent a potential refugee from reaching its border. The Court of Appeal held that the system amounted to "justifiable indirect discrimination" because Roma were more likely than non-Roma to seek asylum.

Overturning the Appeal Court decision, the House of Lords declared that the UK government had discriminated against Roma on racial grounds and that the practice employed by the UK government was "inherently and systematically discriminatory and unlawful".

Baroness Hale said that Czech Roma had good reason to fear persecution in the Czech Republic, but were treated more sceptically by immigration officers "acting on racial grounds". Immigration officers should have treated all passengers equally, she said, and should only have adopted more intrusive methods of questioning when there was a specific reason for doing so.

According to Lady Hale, the combination of the "objective of the whole Prague operation and a very recent ministerial authorisation of discrimination against Roma was, it is suggested, to create such a high risk that the Prague officers would consciously or unconsciously treat Roma less favourably than others".

The human rights group Liberty, which represented the six Roma, said statistics indicated that Czech Roma were 400 times more likely to be stopped by UK immigration officials in Prague than non-Roma. Monitoring carried out between January and April 2002 by the European Roma Rights Centre, an international organisation that monitors and defends the human rights of Roma, showed that 68 out of 78 Roma were stopped from boarding flights to the UK. In contrast, only 14 out of 6,170 non-Roma were prevented from travelling.

The law lords admitted that it was "entirely unsurprising that a far higher proportion of Roma were turned away" but concluded that, "if the officers began their work with a genuinely open mind, it is more surprising that so many of the Roma were refused. If all or almost all asylum seekers are Roma, it does not follow that all or almost all Roma are asylum seekers. It is even more surprising that so few of the non-Roma were refused. One might have expected that there would be more among them whose reasons for wanting to travel to the UK were also worthy of suspicion."

While some of the claimants made no secret of their intention to seek asylum in the UK, one was clearly intending only to visit family, had a return ticket and was travelling alone while her husband, who was awaiting serious surgery, and children remained at home. These facts "do not suggest someone who is planning to abandon her husband and five children and move to England". This example begged the question whether "a non-Roma in similar circumstances would have been refused".

Lord Carswell concurred, stating, "It is not legitimate to apply a stereotype and commence with the assumption that applicants from Roma may be making

false claims and that for that reason their claims require more intensive investigation ... it is in law discriminatory to subject all applicants from Roma to longer and more intensive questioning because so many of them have been known in the past to merit such treatment. What the officers must do is treat all applicants, whatever their racial background, alike in the method of investigation which they carry out until in any individual case sufficient reason appears to prolong or intensify the examination."

This decision is one of the most important in condemning racial discrimination in UK immigration and asylum policy.

The Home Office responded that it had not meant to discriminate against anyone and was disappointed with the decision. "The scheme was operated two years ago as a short term response to the high levels of passengers travelling from Prague who are subsequently found to be ineligible for entry to the UK.

"It sent a clear signal that abuse of our asylum and immigration system would not be tolerated. It was always intended that pre-entry clearance arrangements would be operated in a non-discriminatory manner and in fact it was a precondition of our agreement with the Czech authorities."

The Home Office admitted that the ruling would have implications for future "pre-entry clearance" operations designed to stop people travelling to Britain.

Maeve Sherlock, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "We welcome this important judgement, which reveals the barriers faced by people seeking to claim asylum in the UK. Human rights abuses against the Roma in Eastern Europe are well documented, and it is hugely troubling that the government sought to deny entry to such a vulnerable group.

"In many other countries, barriers have been put up to prevent people being able to get to the UK and access safety here. In light of today's ruling, we call on the government to review this kind of activity and ensure that Britain remains a place of safety for refugees forced to flee their homes."

Shami Chakrabarti, director of Liberty, and Dimitrina Petrova, executive director of the European Roma Rights Centre, said: "This ruling exposes the racism at the heart of the Government's asylum policy. The message was absolutely clear: 'Roma not welcome in the UK'."

Many countries that once gave rise to concerns over asylum are now part of the EU and their citizens are entitled to free movement across Europe. It was this prospect, particularly with reference to Roma, that caused a huge wave of moral panic in the British press and parliament before the latest EU enlargement last May. These fears, for the most part, have not been borne out.

The House of Lords decision is a serious indictment of the UK's human rights record. Aside from the demonisation of asylum seekers in recent history, the UK is the only EU country to have opted out of part of the European Convention on Human Rights in order to detain foreign terror suspects indefinitely. All these things need to be scrutinised carefully if we are to retain the humanitarianism that underlines agreements such as the Geneva Convention that were adopted to protect some of the world's most vulnerable citizens. Upholding these principles is more important than ever in times of great fear and uncertainty where we can lose sight of these aims in favour of protection and isolation.

Every month *Searchlight* magazine exposes the far right in Britain and abroad. *Searchlight* is the main source of information for anyone who wants to know about fascism and organised racism in Britain.

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World View

GERMANY

Uniformed nazis re-enacted battles in eastern Europe

By Graeme Atkinson in Berlin

POLICE CARRIED OUT A SERIES of raids on the homes of nazis in North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony and Bavaria at the end of November and early December.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, police searched premises in Minden, Bad Oeynhausen and Bielefeld, seizing weapons and arresting two nazi extremists who allegedly led a group that re-enacts battles wearing Waffen SS uniforms. The two suspects, aged 20 and 31, were detained after police found two pistols, two machine-guns, a home-made automatic weapon and a quantity of ammunition at their homes.

A spokesman for the state prosecutors' office said the European Association for the Performance of Living History (EDLG), which has about 80 members, 30 of them hardcore nazis, had carried out historical reconstructions and paramilitary exercises outside Germany, usually in Slovakia or the Czech Republic, where it appears to have its headquarters.

In August the EDLG's board posted a brief obituary in the SS veterans' magazine *Der Freiwillige* in memory of the former SS Brigadeführer and Waffen SS general Otto Kumm, who died in March. The obituary was datelined 17 June, Brünn. Brünn is the German name for Brno, capital of Moravia in the Czech Republic.

Peter Schulz, the older of the two suspects, is a long-time nazi activist and no stranger to the police. In 1992, after lengthy contacts with Gary Lauck's US-based nazi NSDAP-AO, he left the electoral fascist Republikaner party to set up a so-called "military sports" group called Heimatschutz Ostwestfalen-Lippe. In 1993 he was convicted on several counts of displaying anti-constitutional symbols and in 2001 he was found guilty on arms charges.

While running around forests as far afield as Lithuania and Greece with other camouflaged and armed nazis, Schulz, codenamed Fraga, informed on them to Germany's internal security service, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz. Where these latest events will leave him remains to be seen.

A week later, officers in Saxony and Bavaria searched 30 homes and businesses as part of the continuing crackdown against the nazi Skinheads Sächsische Schweiz (SSS). The SSS was banned in April 2001 for its violence and allegiance to Nazism after it publicly pledged to "purge" southern Saxony of "foreigners, drug addicts and leftists".

The SSS had around 80 members and another 200 sympathisers when it was banned but the current police investigation is centred on 25 key activists. One of them, Thomas Sattelberg, was arrested in Pirna and charged with trying to revive the organisation. During the raids the police took away illegal propaganda material and a large quantity of computer data and hardware.

Weapons seized from nazi battle re-enactment group

Meanwhile, the trial of four nazis on terrorism charges continues in Munich. The defendants, who are accused of plotting to bomb a synagogue in the city, belonged to a nazi group called the Kameradschaft Süd and include its leader, Martin Wiese, 28, and three of his followers, also in their twenties.

The prosecution says it will seek to prove that the nazis, who had obtained 1.7 kg of TNT for the synagogue attack, were also planning other bombings in the Bavarian capital. Germany's chief Federal Prosecutor, Kay Nehm, has said that the evidence indicates that the nazis were planning to detonate a bomb on the synagogue site near Munich's Jakobsplatz to wreck the foundation stone laying ceremony on 9 November 2003.

According to the state's evidence, Wiese and his comrades bought explosives in Poland, which they tested in small blasts in remote areas. The TNT was part of a total of 14 kg of explosives seized by the police in raids in September 2003.

The group had intended to hide their bomb in a sewer pipe under the synagogue site in a bid to murder Germany's Jewish community leader Paul Spiegel, the federal president Johannes Rau and other civic and political dignitaries.

Nehm says the group had also considered setting off a bomb in the Marienplatz, Munich's main square, as well as attacking people it considered leftist, including the Bavarian Social Democratic leader Franz Maget.

Giving evidence last month, a former associate of Wiese stated that Wiese was intent on "becoming a killer" and told of how in May 2003 Wiese and his co-accused Alexander Maetzing had travelled to eastern Germany and bought six pistols for £2,700 to arm members of his group. "Up to then", said the witness, "I thought the whole business was crazy ... but now I realised how serious it was".

UKRAINE

Fascists exploit political turmoil

By Rafal Pankowski and Natasha Sineaeva for Antifa-Net

UKRAINE SUDDENLY BECAME hot news in the Western media following the disputed presidential election in November. The Western world, it appears, has already made its choice in favour of the opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, a man whom the mass media and international observers have been busy painting in the image of a democratic fighter and defender of human rights, locked in political combat with pro-Russian vote cheat Viktor Yanukovich.

But most of them choose to ignore the antisemitism and extreme ethnic nationalism that is rampant among Yushchenko's so-called Orange demonstrators. Yushchenko and his political allies in "Our Ukraine" have defended antisemitic publications in the past and continue to accept the backing of nazi groups today. Yushchenko himself has never taken a firm line against nationalist and antisemitic trends in the circles around him, even though it is obvious they are not uncommon.

Most of the demonstrators in support of the "Orange revolution" are bussed in to Kiev and other cities from western Ukraine, in particular from Lvov and Ivano-Frankovsk. This part of the country harbours a strongly anti-Russian and anti-Polish Ukrainian nationalist movement that is frequently antisemitic. Its goal is not democracy but the protection and promotion of Ukrainian ethno-national identity.

Many of these nationalists draw inspiration from their ideological predecessors of the 1930s and 1940s. Revising their country's history is a popular activity among them and this goes as far as justifying Ukrainian nationalism's wartime alliance with Hitler's Third Reich.

Veterans – former volunteers of the Waffen SS – now organise marches in Ukraine to express their "patriotism" and to demand equal rights with former soldiers of the Red Army. Nationalistic songs from the Second World War can be heard at demonstrations supporting Yushchenko.

Several hundred young people from the nazi group UNA-UNSO have been active in these pro-Yushchenko

demonstrations. According to some witnesses, they have also acted as security for marchers. Andry Shkil, a former leader of UNA-UNSO, was elected to parliament as an "independent" candidate in the Lvov region backed by Our Ukraine.

The rock group Komu vniz from Lvov, notorious for its promotion of fascist ideas, is one of many pop and rock acts urging young people to support Yushchenko. Its main slogan is "Ukraine for the Ukrainians". Its activities do not seem to provoke much objection from the organisers of the pro-democracy movement.

There are also many nazi skinheads at the Orange camp in Kiev. Their political views are displayed openly with slogans such as "Skins for Yushchenko" on their tents pitched in the city centre, accompanied by such internationally known codes of the nazi movement as "88", which stands for HH – Heil Hitler. While these extreme views are obviously alien to the majority of the Orange demonstrators, such tolerance for open fascism is disturbing.

During the summer, the Pan-Ukrainian Union "Freedom" and its leader, Oleg Tyagnibok, urged all nationalist parties in the country to support Yushchenko. According to its statement, Yushchenko is the only real candidate of the "national-patriotic forces". This outfit formerly went under the name of the Social-National Party and its role model was none other than the French fascist boss Jean-Marie Le Pen, who visited Ukraine at its invitation a few years ago. The party's symbol was then very similar to a swastika. Tyagnibok was, until recently, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament, representing Our Ukraine.

Earlier this year, a prosecution was launched against Tyagnibok over a speech he gave in the Ivano-Frankovsk region near the grave of Klim Savur, a commander of the wartime Ukrainian Insurrectionary Army. Tyagnibok had raved: "They were not afraid, they took guns and went to the forest. They fought against Russians, Germans, Jews and others who wanted to occupy our Ukrainian land. Ukraine must be for the Ukrainians. There is a fear of this Russian-Jewish mafia which rules in Ukraine today." Later in other Ukrainian cities, leaflets headed "Rise up, honest Ukrainians! And kill all Russians" were distributed as part of the agitation for a pro-Yushchenko vote. Tyagnibok was among those who led the Orange mob that stormed the Ukrainian Parliament after the now void presidential election.

Another case of xenophobia that shocked Ukraine in 2004 is also connected with Yushchenko and his allies. The pro-Yushchenko newspaper *Village News*, one of the largest publications in the Ukraine, published an article headed "Jews in Ukraine today: reality without myths", which claimed bizarrely that 400,000 Jews fought alongside Hitler's army in 1941.

The Ukrainian Anti-Fascist Committee promptly initiated a prosecution of the newspaper for promoting inter-ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in Ukraine which was, after all, the location of the infamous 1941 Babi Yar massacre. The paper's editor said: "I personally do not have anything against ordinary Jews but against a small group of Jewish oligarchs who control Ukraine both economically and politically. I believe the point of Zionism today is Jewish control of the world, and we see this process at work in Ukraine today."

A court ordered the paper to be shut down but Our Ukraine immediately started a campaign in its support. Two important political allies of Yushchenko, Yulia Timoshenko and Alexandr Moroz, issued a joint statement headed "Hands off Village News". Moroz insisted: "I have defended *Village News* and will continue to do so. I personally think the argument of the author of the article, Vasily Yaremenko, citing 400,000 Jews in the SS is incorrect, but I am not in a position to know all the facts."

(above) Ukrainian nazis march for Yushchenko while (left) the skins camp out for him

(far left) Viktor Yushchenko

A large former Soviet republic, bordering the Black Sea, Poland, Romania, Moldova and the Russian Federation, Ukraine has a population of around 48 million. A very diverse country, it is currently being rocked by deep historical, religious and linguistic contradictions. Culturally, religiously and politically the country is split into two parts, east and west. The country has a large Russian-speaking minority, around 30% of the population, concentrated mainly in the eastern industrial regions.

Millions of voters belonging to ethnic minorities strongly backed Yanukovich in the presidential election because of their fears of the ethnic nationalism (which includes antisemitism) propagated by Yushchenko's supporters. At the same time, some fascist National Bolsheviks and nazi Russian National Unity members expressed their support for Yanukovich in the rerun of the election on 26 December. Ukrainian branches of these parties exist in the eastern part of the country.

Ukraine is not a homogenous land, and ethnic, cultural and political diversity is there to stay. Unfortunately, however, the country lacks both good and proven democratic leaders and a strong anti-fascist movement. This is evident from the fact that antisemitic books remain popular and that fascists have been able openly to organise demonstrations in city centres for many years.

The authors wish to thank their Ukrainian friend Leonid Savin for his valuable assistance.

SWEDEN

No room for yet another nazi group

By a special correspondent in Stockholm

Anders Lagerstrom not too effectively distancing himself from extremism

EXPO, *SEARCHLIGHT*'S SWEDISH sister magazine, has ripped the mask off a new Swedish nazi organisation even before its first public meeting.

The Nordic Association (NA) is a joint venture by the Nordic Publishing House and the magazines *Nordisk Frihet* (Nordic Freedom) and *Folkets Nyheter* (People's News). During the autumn, the three groups held a series of private lectures for a small circle of people. Afterwards, *Expo* was able to publish what went on from inside sources.

The first lecture was presented by the infamous antisemite Ahmed Rami. Convicted for race hate propaganda, Rami believes that the Jews control the world. "This question is so important and it decides the future for all societies. To me the Jews are the evil in this world. Everything about the Jews is evil," he began his lecture.

Many well known figures in the Swedish nazi scene in Sweden are now hanging around the NA. Its leader Lennart Berg started his career in the violent Swedish Resistance movement, which evolved from the terrorist White Aryan Resistance (VAM), an outfit that tried to launch a race war in Sweden in the early 1990s.

The Nordic Publishing House was founded by Anders Lagerstrom, a former youth leader of the National Democrats and former member of the nazi National Youth.

A statement by the NA explains which groups it will work with and why it thinks a new organisation is needed. The European elections, it concedes, were a big defeat for the so-called "national opposition". This defeat, claims the NA on its website, highlights a long list of failures caused by a "short-sighted strategy of opportunism".

The NA is bitterly critical of almost the entire right-wing extremist movement in Sweden, lashing out and screaming at both the suit-and-tie-fascists and the more radical militant nazi organisations.

In its first 88-page issue, *Nordisk Frihet*, contains a long article about the late US nazi boss William Pierce whom Berg has recently been trying to imitate with radio speeches on the NA's website.

The NA's long-term goal is to operate as a kind of nazi think-tank by staging lectures and producing its own publications and books aimed at "waking up the Swedish people".

Until a few weeks ago, very few people had heard about the secretive NA but when leading nazis found out about it through *Expo*'s website they were livid. The NA had, it appears, wanted to conceal its existence from as many people as possible so that it could found an organisation without interference from other nazi groups.

Many leading nazis now feel betrayed and distrusted and have distanced themselves from the new project. The Nordic Publishing House has, for the past three years, been the largest printed propaganda distributor for the nazi movement in Sweden. However, that was before it decided to try to launch an organisation.

Many people were upset when Lagerstrom was invited to take part in a nazi march in 2003 in Salem, a Stockholm suburb, where around 2,000 nazis gather each December in memory of a young nazi killed four years ago. When it became widely known that he was a new leader of the National Democrats, which has been ravaged by splits, he was forced out of his responsibilities in connection with the event.

When the National Democrats imploded in 2004, Lagerstrom quit the party and quickly started working on his new pet project, the NA. His move is destined to lose the Nordic Publishing House many of its customers.

The NA has got a leadership but will have problems attracting a membership. The nazi scene is simply too small for yet another organisation and it is unclear whether it can compete with existing organisations.

From the outset, the NA has maintained that the movement in Sweden is full of opportunists or just plain stupid for its errant belief in a coming race war. By attacking its fellow nazis in this way, it has isolated itself politically and probably already dug its own grave.

World View

Jewish community expels couple who marched with racists

From Tor Bach for Monitor and Antifa-Net in Oslo

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY organisation in Oslo – Det Mosaiske Trossamfund (DMT) – has thrown out two of its members after they were involved in an attempt to provoke a punch-up at the Kristallnacht commemoration march in Oslo on 9 November.

Erez Uriely and his wife, Rachel Suissa, representing the so-called Norwegian Israel Centre, were there with the extremist anti-immigrant party the Democrats and members of the racist Forum Against Islamisation (FOMI). The Democrats are a splinter group from Carl I. Hagen's anti-immigrant populist Progress Party, while the FOMI consists of anti-Islamic activists with backgrounds in a galaxy of right- wing extremist groups.

On the morning of 9 November, a message on the Democrats' website trumpeted the claim that the *Kristallnacht* commemoration had been taken over by "Jew haters and left extremists". The Democrats therefore urged people to turn up with Israeli flags.

This was a clear provocation as the organisers had publicly banned the display of national flags in order to avoid any clashes over the Middle East conflict. The police were immediately warned.

Although later that day the Democrats removed the announcement from the front of their website, apparently because it was too provocative, the motley crew of Islamophobes and extreme opponents of immigration were still being urged to mobilise and duly turned up at the *Kristallnacht* march. Uriely was seen wearing a tallit, which deeply upset several Jewish people who considered it a gross violation of the *Halacha* and a mockery of Jewish ritual symbols.

At the assembly point, police halted the handful of provocateurs and ordered them to go home. Before leaving the ultra right-wing ragbag started to scream that the police were refusing the right of Jews to commemorate *Kristallnacht*.

Demonstrating its lack of objective sources, the television channel TV2 echoed this cry on the evening news, while the Israeli ambassador Liora Hercz, apparently oblivious to what had actually happened, expressed her outrage at the exclusion of Uriely and his far-right friends.

The Norwegian Israel Centre passed the story to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in the USA, prompting an official protest to the Norwegian ambassador in Washington. In a subsequent press statement, Uriely claimed that the demonstration set up by the extremist and racist Democrats was actually a group of Jews together with "some Norwegian friends".

Angered by this behaviour, the board of the DMT decided the same evening to exclude Uriely and Suissa with immediate effect, stating that the Forum Against Islamisation represents an ideology that the Jewish community, as a cultural and religious minority in Norwegian society, cannot accept.

Despite several letters from both the Norwegian Association Against Antisemitism and the DMT to clarify the situation, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre has not replied.

Any alliance between right-wing extremists sailing under Jewish and Christian flags together with notorious racists should be enough to sound the alarm bells among principled anti-racists. United in their common hatred of Islam and Muslims, rather than in any love for Jews, these extremists represent a new and frightening tendency. The fact that supposedly heavyweight institutions such as the Simon Wiesenthal Centre play along with these forces shows that the time is overdue for mobilising against anti-Islamic sentiment every bit as much against antisemitism and other forms of racism.

The Kristallnacht commemoration march showed the only answer to the extreme right was to fight against racism in all its forms

AUSTRIA

Government subsidises antisemitic rag

From Karl Pfeifer in Vienna

A PROMINENT MEMBER of the British Conservative Party's Austrian allies is a joint publisher of an antisemitic and racist newspaper. Johann Josef Dengler, a former Austrian ambassador and member of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), publishes the Vienna weekly *Zur Zeit* in conjunction with Andreas Mölzer, an MEP for Jörg Haider's right-wing extremist Freedom Party (FPÖ), and Federal Counsellor John Gudenus, also of the FPÖ. The FPÖ is the junior coalition partner in the Austrian Government, which is led by the ÖVP. The Conservative Party and the ÖVP sit together in the European People's Party group in the European Parliament.

Zur Zeit, which receives more than £40,000 a year in government subsidy, constantly publishes antisemitic and racist articles. Mölzer is also chief editor but the presence of Dengler enables the paper to brand itself as "conservative".

One of the most frequent contributors of antisemitic and racist bile is Gerhard Sailer, a former supporter of the nazi Aktion Neue Rechte (ANR). In 1997 he wrote a review, in the German extreme right-wing weekly *Junge Freiheit*, of a booklet about the Austrian anti-fascist scene, in which he complained about the terror "of state anti-fascism after 1945".

Since 1998, Sailer has contributed to the extreme right-wing *fakten*, where he concentrates on propaganda against foreigners and the EU. He also defends the perpetrators of nazi crimes, whom he describes as "victims of political persecution" and "dissidents".

In May 2001 in *Zur Zeit* Sailer asked: "Why is the FPÖ participating in government, if asylum criminals and half-Africans can create a horrible state of affairs and if citizens are made to suffer worse extortion than ever before from dubious claims for damages [by the victims of the Nazis].

In *Zur Zeit* issue no 46 of 2004, Sailer was at it again, this time ranting about the new building at Vienna's central library. According to him, black dealers "leaf through English language newspapers with pleasure until their beeping mobile phones call them to work: 'Hello? Five white balls? 300 euros is OK? In five minutes at the corner of Westbahnstrasse? You understand?'" The following week he complained about "a group of loud Africans" he met in a provincial railway station and that a hotel in the same town had been transformed into a home for refugees.

It is worth noting that Sailer is no street corner loudmouth but a high ranking civil servant in the Ministry for Infrastructure and Transport, headed by the FPÖ vice-Chancellor Hubert Gorbach.

The idea that international Jewry controls the global economy, politics and media is one of the classic and most potent elements of antisemitism. In *Zur Zeit* nos 44-45 of 2004, the Catholic fundamentalist Friedrich Romig openly promotes this theory. The Jewish world conspiracy starts, he claims, in the USA, where the "influence" and "control" of the Jews "is not restricted to the politics of the government, but extends to high finance, industry, the armaments industry and the whole of cultural and spiritual life, including science, the media and the entertainment business".

With the "war against terror", he says, "this influence is [expanding] to the whole world". It has, he believes, promoted decisively the "new world order" which is allegedly ruled by "the Israeli-American connection". According to Romig, the aim of this world order is the "Judaising ... of the world". He continues with resignation: "The 'chosen people' is nearer to its divine assignment of ruling the world".

Romig goes on to declare that "Christendom and the Catholic church [have] given up their resistance to the Judaising and globalisation of the world". Seemingly troubled by apocalyptic visions he concludes: "The triumphal procession of the Antichrist can hardly be stopped".

Another antisemitic *Zur Zeit* regular is Romig's fellow Catholic fundamentalist Dr Robert Prantner, a theologian and former director of the ÖVP's political academy. Prantner is a specialist on the subjects of the Jewish world conspiracy and the Freemasons. He claims to have located the source of all evil in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution and has come to the conclusion that "55 years after the end of the bloody Second World War, in which the majority of religious people allied with God tried to fend off godless Bolshevism, Europeans are turning away from God forever". This is a very strange point of view for a man who claimed after the war to have been, as a 14-year-old boy, a victim of National Socialism.

In an earlier article, in December 1999, Prantner alleged that Jews committed ritual murder and argued that they should ask Christians for forgiveness for their sins. As if this were not enough, Prantner declared in *Zur Zeit* in 2002 that the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 were carried out by the Americans themselves. Only a few weeks later he "revealed" that "an ill-reputed secret service of the Middle East, which he does not name "because of his personal security", perpetrated the attacks "in order to stir up American public opinion against the Arabs and Islam".

These are commonly held views in the Arab world as well as in the Austrian extreme right. The logic of this ridiculous premise is obviously that "it's all the fault of the Jews".

In *Zur Zeit* nos 25-26 of 2004, Prantner wrote some interesting news about the World Bank, which he claims is "the domain of 'insiders'" who are the "descendants of the Old Testament".

Even more interesting are the views of Mölzer who wrote in *Zur Zeit* on 12 November, "Whoever, for instance, believed that under Kerry eternal peace and ideal partnership with Europe would have broken out is mistaken. On the contrary: let us remember that in each case it was under presidents who were Democrats that the USA led crusades against the German centre of Europe." He observes that, "Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt were the presidents in the First and Second World Wars. Their motives, to lead a war against central Europe, were always accompanied by wonderful idealistic highly democratic lip service. Nevertheless their actions were of significant brutality."

Despite the fact that Hitler declared war on the USA on 11 December 1941, the Nazis saw themselves as Roosevelt's victims, Mölzer believes. It is views like these with which the FPÖ has aligned itself and which the Austrian state is subsidising.

ITALY

Fascism moves onto a world stage

Alfio Bernabei

GIANFRANCO FINI, best known as Mussolini's political heir, has been appointed Italy's new Foreign Minister. He is now likely to carry the fascist symbol through the front door of 10 Downing Street and up the staircase of the British Foreign Office. Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's Prime Minister, has pushed the former black shirt onto the doorsteps of every Foreign Ministry around the world giving nazis and fascists an encouraging signal. Fini's promotion sends out a clear message: any determined neo-fascist can close in on the centre of power at national and international level, provided he wins the support of an unscrupulous television tycoon turned politician who is happy to share the company of fascists and racists.

Berlusconi handpicked the fascist Fini as his political running mate way back in 1993 at a time when Fini was telling the world, "Mussolini is the greatest statesman of the 20th century, an example of love for his country and her people". By that time Fini had spent 25 years as a committed fascist, groomed by Giorgio Almirante, a nazi who joined Mussolini's Salò Republic under the control of Adolf Hitler. Almirante was convinced that the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), the party he had co-founded as inheritor of the black shirts, needed a leader born after the war in order to rehabilitate fascism in a new environment. In 1987 he propelled Fini to the post of party secretary. A year later Fini was shaking hands with Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the French fascist Front National, on whom he had bestowed honorary membership of the MSI.

On his next visit to London Fini will expect to shake hands with Foreign Minister Jack Straw and Prime Minister Tony Blair, both of whom are already very good friends of Berlusconi. If he does it will be the first time that a nazi fascist symbol enters the Foreign Office or Downing Street. The leader of the neo-fascist National Alliance Party wears a badge on his lapel. It represents the eternal flame that burns on Mussolini's tomb and shows pride in the values of fascism. Straw and Blair will be perfectly aware that by allowing Fini to introduce this symbol into their offices they will also allow him to claim a small but significant fascist victory. This will best be savoured by those in his party who flock to Predappio to pay homage to Mussolini, by the openly fascist members of the youth wing of his party, and by his many influential friends and government ministers who remain fascists.

The task of rehabilitating fascism has forced Fini to juggle his past as a staunch black shirt and the verbal camouflage required by mass communication. Some Italian nazi fascists have been incensed at some of his statements, which have expressed criticism of fascism. They have called him a traitor and have condemned his visits to Israel. But most have understood that for fascism to advance in our time a strategy is required in which the political leaders play the game of respectability to get close to the centre of power, while it is left to foot soldiers scattered around in a myriad of groups, inside or outside the state apparatus, to do the dirty work.

A typical example of this was seen at the Genoa 2002 G8 meeting when thousands of anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation protesters staged huge demonstrations. Fini, as Deputy Prime Minister, dramatically arrived in town and let it be known that he had moved into the operation room at police headquarters. What ensued was a vicious attack on the protesters. There was also a nighttime blitz on a school where dozens of people were asleep. Those arrested underwent savage beatings and degrading treatment while police chanted fascist slogans. A protester was killed. The knowledge that a former black shirt was "in command" was sufficient encouragement for the unleashing of a bloody "Chilean style" assault by the police.

Very ambitious and politically astute, Fini realised years ago that as someone who had represented a party identified with Mussolini's racial laws and the Holocaust, he would not be welcomed in many European capitals without the blessing of a political leader in Israel. In 1995 hundreds of anti-fascist demonstrators disrupted his visit to London and forced him to cancel his Chatham House speech. He had to deliver it elsewhere. Shouts of "Fini Mussolini!" could be heard from the street. Anti-fascist protesters pelted him with eggs when he went to visit Auschwitz. In Italy itself an anti-fascist took a can of bleach and went to clean the floor after he had paid a visit to the site of a nazi fascist massacre. Something had to be done.

After assiduously courting the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2003 and 2004 he was allowed to pay two visits to Jerusalem. In exchange for the favour that was giving him in effect a passport to European capitals, Fini expressed unqualified support for the controversial wall on the West Bank.

Many in Italy find Fini's opportunism so transparent as to appear almost shocking, but under Berlusconi he has a real chance to train as a future prime minister, although his party represents no more than 12% of the electorate. Berlusconi of course is getting something in return. Fini has provided the essential backing for the new laws that have been passed to protect the tycoon's private interests and shield him from being tried with the risk of going to jail. *Una mano lava l'altra*, says an Italian proverb. Roughly translated it means one hand helps to wash the other.

Gianfranco Fini speaks to the faithful

BELGIUM

Business as usual for new VB

Wim Haelsterman for AFF/Verzet-CAF/Résistances in Brussels

THE VLAAMS BLOK, Belgium's racist party, changed its name to Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) at a party gathering in Antwerp on 14 November 2004. This manoeuvre was a direct result of the party's conviction for racism in early November.

Karel Dillen, the former president and founder of the Vlaams Blok, was given the first membership card of the new party but "Member no 1" was unable to be present at the festivities because of serious illness. During the congress, the new party's leadership reported that 700 "newcomers" had joined since the verdict against the Vlaams Blok.

The Vlaams Belang's new logo is no surprise: the head of a lion surrounded by a frame in the official Flemish colours of black and yellow. An attentive journalist has noted that the greyish lion is identical to the symbol used by a Nazi organisation called Sint-Maartensfonds (St Martin Fund) which brings together the small number of former Waffen SS-volunteers from Flanders. "Just a coincidence", claimed a Vlaams Belang spokesman.

Nothing has changed, a fact that all the speakers went out of their way to emphasise in the speeches that preceded the "supreme moment" at which the new name was revealed.

Even the column by the party president Frank Vanhecke on the party's website is headed "Nothing has changed".

Philip Dewinter, a demagogue par excellence, did his utmost to prove that the new party will not be a soft copy or "light" version of the Vlaams Blok and finished an aggressive speech by yelling, in imitation of the late US president Ronald Reagan, "You ain't seen nothing yet".

Gerolf Annemans, a VB MP, went further, openly threatening the prosecutors and judges responsible for the verdict. He stated that he would never forget what they had done and telling them that they had better watch their steps if they did not want to put their careers at risk. Such attempted bullying could lead to a new prosecution and at least one judge in Brussels is reported to be considering legal action.

The leader of Vlaams Belang will be Frank Vanhecke, the man who has run Vlaams Blok for the past eight years. Dillen originally nominated Vanhecke as president of the Vlaams Blok in 1996 at a party meeting titled "The people decide". Dillen had previously nominated himself "president for life" in the most dictatorial manner imaginable at the formation of the Vlaams Blok late in 1979.

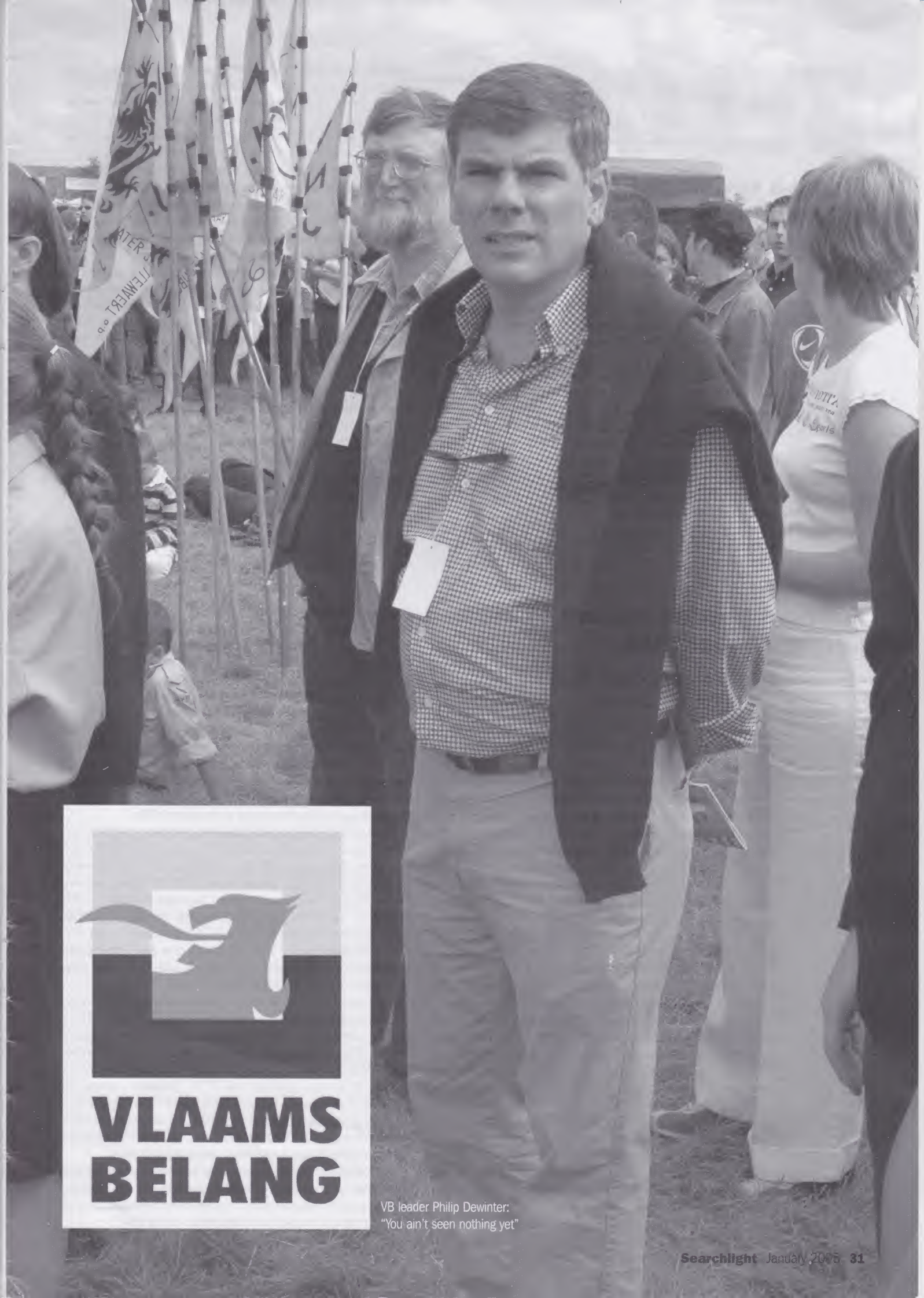
The new rules of the party demand that the party council elects the president rather than the members. To everyone's surprise, Vanhecke had to confront a last-minute rival candidate for the presidency, the previously unknown Erland Pison from Brussels, who claimed to be the voice of young people and newcomers in the party. Pison, a 31-year-old lawyer, has been an MP in the Brussels regional parliament since June 2004 and heads the Brussels branch of the VBJ, the party's youth section. His personal campaign for the last regional elections focussed partly on the French-speaking electorate in the capital.

Despite Pison's challenge, 75% of party council members voted for Vanhecke. That Pison got as much as 25% is remarkable and demonstrates the existence of different tendencies within the right-wing extremist party, something that the leadership has always strenuously denied. Vanhecke, apparently not amused with the result, called it "an important signal" but refused to elaborate.

The new party will now spend £1 million of government money in the coming months to make its new name and logo known to the public. One might wonder why, because Vlaams Belang's manoeuvres have already received massive media attention.

So far none of the other Flemish parties has dared openly to discuss collaboration with the "new Vlaams Blok" but the municipal elections of 2006 will be an important test for the cordon sanitaire which keeps the racists' hands off public office but which tends to be rather weaker at a local level.

World View



VB leader Philip Dewinter:
"You ain't seen nothing yet"

BELGIUM

Flemish revisionist faces extradition for internet activities

Wim Haelsterman for AFF/Verzet-CAF/Résistances in Brussels

A FLEMISH HOLOCAUST denier and publisher faces extradition to Germany after being arrested on a European warrant. Siegfried Verbek of the revisionist Foundation for Free Historical Research (VHO) was taken into custody in his home town of Kortrijk, in west Flanders on 27 November after a local judge ordered the execution of the warrant issued by the German justice authorities. Verbeke, 63, could face five years in prison on the charges, which arise from his activities on the internet.

This is not Verbeke's first brush with German law. In 1998 he was prosecuted by a Frankfurt court for distributing a papmphlet titled "Goldhagen and Spielberg lies". Remaining copies of this vile publication by the VHO's German branch were confiscated and pulped.

Verbeke has faced several court cases and legal proceedings over the past 15 years. In May 1996 a Dutch court handed him a £1,600 fine and a six months suspended sentence. The Dutch court of appeal confirmed the verdict a year later. The case had been brought to court by the Anne Frank Foundation, the National Anti-Racist Bureau and the Israel Information and Documentation Centre in 1992. So far, Verbeke's brushes with the law have not stopped him from continuing his revisionist activities.

In 2003, Verbeke was convicted with his brother Herbert in Belgium for breaking the federal anti-revisionist law of 1995. He was sentenced to a year and a half on probation and fined another £1,600. His civil rights were also taken away for ten years. Siegfried Verbeke faced the judge on his own as his brother seems to have disappeared.

Verbeke, a former member of the Vlaams Blok and the outlawed nazi militia, the Vlaamse ‚Militanten Orde (VMO), started his revisionist activities in Antwerp three decades ago with the help of a small group of Flemish nazis. In 1983 he founded his infamous VHO, a pseudo-scientific "foundation" that has made its way into the national media more than once by distributing free revisionist books and brochures. Public libraries, schools and research centres have all been the targets of gifts from the VHO. In 1997 joint activity with the German Auschwitz liar Germar Rudolf signalled the start of the VHO's internet presence.

Verbeke's premises have been searched on several occasions following complaints and the police have, more than once, had to contend with a massive stock of revionist publications.

So far, however, no one seems to have to have asked where the money comes from to finance the production and distribution of all this.

Far-right parties commit to cross border cooperation

From Jeroen Bosch for Alert! and Antifa-Net in Utrecht

Far-right extremists from five countries met in Antwerp to discuss the future of the radical right in Europe and develop a joint strategy for future transnational election campaigns. The meeting on 1 December brought together Filip Dewinter of the new Vlaams Belang (VB) in Belgium, Mario Borghezio of the Italian Lega Nord, Andreas Mölzer of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Bruno Gollnisch of the French Front National (FN) and Michiel Smit, leader of the Dutch fascist NieuwRechts.

One of the topics under discussion was the possibility of a joint list for the next European Parliament elections in 2009. The participants also made a commitment to try to keep all conflicts internal.

As recently as last summer, the South Tyrol issue was a point of bitter wrangling between the FPÖ and the Lega Nord and similar territorial questions shattered relations between Vlaams Belang (then called the Vlaams Blok) and the FN. Predictably the main common campaign issue will be the fight to keep Turkey out of the EU. The meeting also agreed to change the vocabulary for propaganda. The terms "identity" and "patriotism" will apparently replace "race" and "nationalism".

Much anger was vented about the Vlaams Blok's recent conviction for racism and participants agreed to educate its successor about the experiences of the Lega Nord and FPÖ, which are junior coalition partners in the Italian and Austrian governments respectively.

Pan-European co-operation of extreme right-wing parties has been a long-time goal of Andreas Mölzer, chief editor of the Austrian extreme right-wing weekly *Zur Zeit* and a member of the European Parliament.

In November 2001 he organised a meeting attended by Dewinter; Heinrich Lummer, a former Senator for Internal Affairs in Berlin and a spokesman for the rightist wing of the conservative CDU; Bruno Mégret, leader of the French Mouvement National Républicain (MNR); Istvan Csurka of the Hungarian Party for Justice and Life (MIEP); Hela Susi from the Estonian Fatherland Party and the notorious German right-wing extremist and former Green MP Alfred Mechtersheimer,

Most interestingly, the man in charge of security at that meeting was Gerhard Endres, a hardcore NSDAP-AO enthusiast and former vice-chairman of the nazi group VAPO, which was banned in Austria in the 1990s because of its "national socialist activities". Endres was also responsible for security at annual Rudolf Hess memorial marches in the early 1990s.

The Antwerp meeting was inspired by recent events in the Netherlands or, as Mölzer put it: "The results in Holland are only the first signs of the collapse of the left-wing multicultural society". Mölzer sees possible future partners in the Danish People's Party and perhaps in some of the parties at the 2001 meeting. Needless to say, if the four most successful European extreme rightist parties – VB, FN, FPÖ and Lega Nord – can cooperate and even strengthen their alliance with potentially other big parties joining, anti-fascists in Europe will have to do likewise.

The latest unity moves will not be all plain sailing because of competition from the so-called European National Front (ENF). The ENF's member organisations are more openly fascist. They include the Nationale Alliantie (Netherlands), Forza Nuova (Italy), Noua Dreapta (Romania), Nacionala Speka Savieniba (Latvia), the NOP (Poland), Slovenska Pospolitost (Slovakia), Narodni Sjednoceni (Czech Republic), La Falange (Spain), England First, the English representative of the International Third Position, and last but not least the German Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands.

The Nationale Alliantie entered this extremist pact at the end of October at a meeting in Poland and the ENF will, besides taking up all the obvious fascist issues, campaign against Israel entering the EU (!) and the "dictatorship of the USA".

World View

NETHERLANDS

Fascists fail to exploit van Gogh aftermath

From Jeroen Bosch for *Alert!* and Antifa-Net in Utrecht

Extreme-right and fascist parties in the Netherlands have been trying to capitalise on the wave of Islamophobia that has raged across the country since the killing of filmmaker Theo van Gogh and the arrest of several Islamic terrorist suspects.

In the days immediately after the murder, the fascists staged some very small, and in their eyes disappointing, demonstrations, while a 30-strong mob of unorganised white racist youths attempted to disrupt a van Gogh commemoration in the northern town of Haarlem.

The fascist Nationale Alliantie (NA) demonstrated in Rotterdam but had to stop its march because police "feared public disturbances". There were no arrests. On 6 November, a crowd of people gathered at the Dutch consulate across the border in Flanders. Mobilised by the extreme right-wing Vlaams Blok and Voorpost, they read out van Gogh's final newspaper column and laid flowers.

The NA, however, is really more interested in bombs than flowers. Its internet forum contains the message: "The people who burn Muslim schools can be well used in the white movement".

Not surprisingly, the NA was mentioned in the media in connection with a bomb detonated by remote control at an Islamic school in Eindhoven on 8 November. The NA has nervously distanced itself from the bombing with a statement saying "as far as we know until now no NA members were involved in the incidents".

However a known NA sympathiser was convicted for a petrol bomb attack on the same school on 15 June 2003 and this same creature was last seen at an NA demonstration on 20 August last year, protesting against Eindhoven's refugee centre.

The wave of attacks on mosques and Islamic schools was also greeted enthusiastically on the internet forum of the fascist NieuwRechts and various Fortuynist web forums. But the fascist website Revolutionary White Hand also calls for attacks on Jewish houses and synagogues, and the homes of police officers, judges and media figures. "Don't call war on your own people by rejecting Islam totally," says the site. "In the near future we will work together with Aryan Muslims against the Jews." The Revolutionary White Hand, whoever they are, also refers to the antisemitic *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, before ending with the message: "Don't be played around by Zion".

Another cheerful reaction to the incitement of racism came from Michael Krick, a German nazi who was active in the Racial Volunteer Force before he was arrested on 25 November at the request of the German authorities. Krick declared the killing of van Gogh a good idea because "he was a Jew anyway".

Krick was also arrested in The Netherlands in January 2002 on his way to a meeting attended by British National Party members and other nazis in Oldham. He was subsequently released. He still faces extradition to Germany for a series of offences, including possessing CDs with Holocaust denial lyrics and flaunting an SS tattoo at a nazi demonstration in Berlin.

While fascists have cheered on the violence, attacks on Islamic targets have continued. On 13 November racists burned a wooden mosque to the ground in the southern town of Helden and a Turkish mosque in Maassluis was set ablaze.

There was another attack on a mosque in Lelystad. Elsewhere police arrested four people for a plot to burn a mosque in Gorinchem and a 16-year-old boy for an arson attack on a Turkish centre in Alkmaar.

At the time of writing, the police were saying there had been 96 incidents not including graffiti, punch-ups and scuffles between white and migrant youths. Although the number of attacks seemed to be falling by the first week of December, some mosques were still under guard. Some city councils have decided not to report incidents any more because of the mobilising effect they could have.

Rumours of possible right-wing extremist intervention hit the media when, weeks after the event, it was reported that the nazi Nederlandse Volks Unie (NVU) had gathered in Maastricht on 7 November to commemorate Hitler's failed putsch in Munich on 9 November 1923. The nazis were treated to speeches by Ralf Tegethoff of the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD) and Stewart Mordaunt, a member of the BNP and the banned Centrum Party '86. The establishment of a youth branch of the NVU in a small town near Nijmegen also grabbed media attention.

The inflated amount of recent coverage is an indication that the media have only now suddenly stumbled upon the existence of ultra right-wing and fascist groups in the Netherlands and the problem of openly racist, unorganised and sometimes violent white youths in rural areas.

Such media attention can restrict the racists, but it can also provide free publicity if coverage of extreme-right activities is uncritical. Up to now, it appears that the organised racists and fascists are finding it hard to profit from the widespread anti-Muslim anger, even if NieuwRechts claims to recruit ten new members every day.

That the right-wing extremists are having difficulties was proven when Anti-Fascist Action alerted the owner of a hall in The Hague where the ultra-right committee Nee tegen Turkije (No to Turkey) was trying to hold a meeting. This committee consists of Jongrechts, the youth branch of NieuwRechts and the Nationale Beweging (National Movement), a bunch of radical extremist nationalists under the leadership of the fascist veteran Tim Mudde, who is also the leader of the hate rock band Brigade M. The owner cancelled the meeting and made public his desire not to be associated with extreme-right racists.

Searchlight on the STATES

Old year ends much as it began ... with a few exceptions

By Leonard Zeskind
for IREHR and Antifa-Net

AS DECEMBER 2004 melded seamlessly into January 2005, the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were still in court, arguing that a New York City anti-mask statute be declared an unconstitutional abridgment of their freedom of speech. Assisted by a civil liberties foundation, the Klan group claims that the mask is part of its message and not an instrument to hide the perpetrators of racist terror from public view. The Supreme Court will probably hear the case, but either way white sheets are not likely soon to become the racist uniform of choice.

Meanwhile the beat of hate crimes pounds on. In Simi Valley, California, for example, four white teenagers were arrested for beating a 17-year-old black man as he tried to shop at a local mall. Not to be outdone, an Aryan Nations member in Nevada confessed to emailing death threats to government workers, and now faces five years in prison. In Utah, 12 jailed members of the so-called Soldiers of Aryan Culture are once again facing court sanctions. So are dozens of other small-time white supremacist criminals across the county though none have yet to mount a full-scale bank robbing, radio host killing guerrilla army as in decades past. Criminal violence was just more criminal and less political last year.

Except the Panzerfaust arrest, maybe. Operated out of Minnesota by Anthony Pierpont and Byron Calvert, two movement veterans in their thirties, Panzerfaust distributed white power CDs and paraphernalia with an ear much closer to the heartbeat of skinhead culture than its commercial rival, Resistance Records. In recent years it had started to catch up with the National Alliance business venture, particularly in sales volume. But as December began, Pierpont was taken to jail with possible drug charges pending. Notwithstanding, Panzerfaust continued as before, carving and recarving the existing music market, but otherwise advancing little further than it had the year before.

Simply put, white nationalists in the now traditional centres of activity – Klansmen, skinheads, neo-Nazis and Christian patriots alike – did little better in 2004 than in 2003, except, perhaps, the National Alliance. The inheritors of William Pierce's organisational will were given a boost in the arm by David Duke's reappearance on their scene. After a Memorial Day meeting in New Orleans where Duke virtually partnered up with the Alliance's Kevin Strom, Duke has continued to give a prominent place to the Alliance on a weekly internet radio broadcast. Far more charismatic than any of the existing crop of National Alliance leaders, Duke gives the organisation something it did not have in 2003: upfront physical presence. The question is whether Strom and company can turn that into new growth in the coming year.

For white nationalists with one foot inside the Republican Party, by contrast, 2004 turned into a banner year. Although they butted heads with the Bush leadership on issues such as the war in Iraq, they won significant battles both inside the party at the local level as well as statewide in Arizona. Working under an umbrella sponsored by Colorado Representative Tom Tancredo and publicist Pat Buchanan, white nationalists have raised their work against legal immigrants, as well as those without papers, to a fevered pitch. Now one bloc of individuals and organisations has declared war on another – those they believe are neo-conservatives inside their movement. And that may be the most significant difference between the year's end and its beginning.

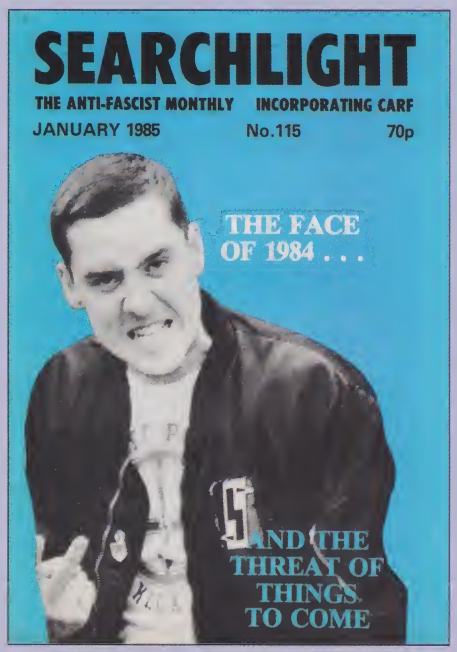
The battle lines boil down to this. On one side is Virginia Abernethy, chair of the anti-immigrant group Protect Arizona Now, and those who turn around the Council of Conservative Citizens' axis. On the other side is the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a financially larger outfit with more actual power in Congress. Money is at least part of the beef, as the remuneration package of FAIR's executive director tops $250,000 (£130,000), an excessive amount by any movement standard. But the gripe is also about strategy, as FAIR's focus on "illegal" immigration often excludes the concerns of others who want to end *all* new entries. The bickering has just started, but in Arizona, where FAIR dumped $400,000 to bolster local groups, activists have already posted anti-FAIR bulletins on the internet.

For its part, FAIR continues to focus on the main chance. In a post-election analysis, it contends that the key challenge it faces is convincing the House and Senate leadership "that there is no electoral mandate for open borders, guestworker, and amnesty proposals". On that last point, FAIR (as well as detractors such as Abernethy) will ultimately have to contend with President Bush, who favours a guestworker programme with an quasi-amnesty provision.

If anti-racists and those opposed to the American First-style white nationalism now growing inside Republican ranks hope to make a few points in the year ahead – a year certain to be politically and spiritually dismal in any case – they will pay attention to these new fissures. And perhaps add a few of their own.

World View

From the archives



20 years ago
January 1985

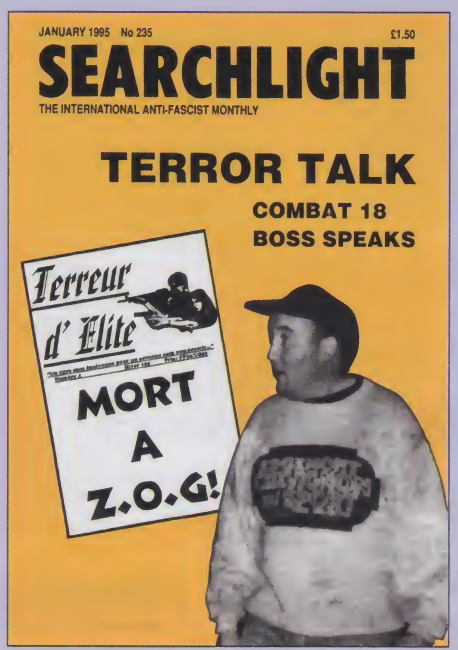
Terrified Brons quits as Front chairman

National Front chairman Andrew Brons has quit his post, terrified at the increasingly violent and illegal activities of the Strasserite leadership who have been in the saddle for the last twelve months.

His decision, announced at the end of November and put down to marital pressure, came only a week after the Front's Annual General Meeting where open threats of violence against Front opponents were made from the platform by party leaders.

Brons, sitting on the top table, was clearly upset, particularly at the threats issued against North London Poly by Ian Stuart, now on the NF National Directorate.

Brons has been frightened for some time that the Front's known associations with Italian terrorists, its increasingly open involvement in violence, and the rising number of prosecutions against its leaders, might rub off on him. A lecturer in constitutional law, he feared his career might be seriously jeopardised by these carryings on.



10 years ago
January 1995

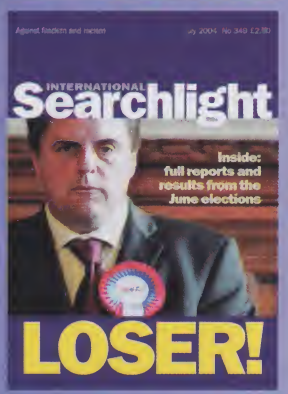
Youth who attacked Muktar Ahmed goes free

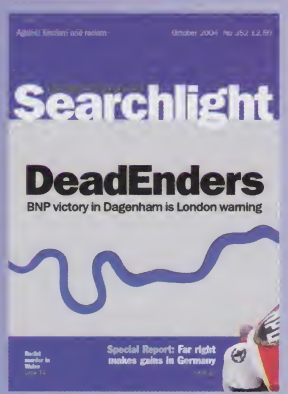
Nicky Fuller, 17, one of a racist gang who beat Muktar Ahmed close to death, has been released from custody.

Judge Peter Rountree at Inner London Crown Court explained that he could only sentence Fuller to 11 months' youth custody because of sentencing restrictions. Fuller had in effect already served that by being held for six months awaiting trial.

Mr Ahmed, 20, became separated from five Asian friends as they ran away from a 20-strong racist gang in Bethnal Green, east London, last February. He was trapped near some garages and beaten to the ground. His head was kicked backwards and forwards like a football and his scalp was detached from his skull.

He suffered awful facial injuries. Detective Inspector Pete Ship said: "Muktar was unrecognisable as a human being when I first saw him. He will be scarred for life, mentally and physically".





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DETAIL OF HISTORY?

et Agent's public work

Paul Meszaros interviews Andy Sykes

The anti-fascist mole who brought Bradford BNP to its knees has had an interesting few months since his "outing" on the BBC documentary *The Secret Agent*. In between dodging numerous death threats, one of which resulted in a court awarding him £100 damages, Andy Sykes has been speaking at events and assisting the anti-BNP crusade in Bradford.

Recently he was introduced to a full meeting of Bradford Council at which 86 of the 90 councillors praised his courage and determination in exposing the evil of the nazis in our midst. Unsurprisingly, the four BNP councillors did not seem too pleased. Then again they are a particularly odd minority. Their most recent self-inflicted stupidity was an attempt to gag the local press. Thankfully willingness to defend our democratic traditions has galvanised all other politicians locally into adopting a hardline stance where these nazis are concerned.

Sykes has been particularly inspired by his recent trip to Auschwitz to see for himself the remnants of the Nazi death camps. In an exclusive interview for *Searchlight* Sykes spoke to Paul Meszaros of Bradford TUC about his recent experiences and plans for the future.

How did you get to go to Poland?
I was invited by the Sefton Project, which aims to educate young people about the Holocaust. The project is sponsored by the trade union Unison.

Who else went on the trip?
We were accompanied by Unison organisers and school kids from different places. We were also honoured to have with us the Auschwitz survivor Arek Hersh, whose book, *A Detail of History*, tells the story of his life including his time in the death camps.

Did you realise that the title of Arek's book was a reference to the French Nazi leader Jean-Marie Le Pen?
Yes and I was particularly pleased to expose the BNP and their Fre
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Anti-fascist mole Andy Sykes (right) with the French Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who described the Holocaust as a mere detail of history. Left: the reality of the Nazi death camps